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**Franco years in Spain through El Clásico:  
FC Barcelona vs. Real Madrid**

*Diplomová práce*

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## Anotace

Diplomová práce „Frankova éra ve Španělsku ze zorného úhlu El Clásica: FC Barcelona proti Realu Madrid“ pojednává o rivalitě mezi kluby Real Madrid a FC Barcelona během éry Francova režimu. Fotbalový tým Real Madrid je klubem, jenž byl silně podporován frankistickou vládou Španělska, naopak klub FC Barcelona vykazuje silnou symbolickou hodnotu v Katalánsku. Má práce si klade za cíl analyzovat a zkoumat jejich vzájemnou rivalitu a hru nazývanou se El Clásico, jež názorně ukazují, že se jedná o více než fotbal. Jeden z důkazů jsou jsou vášnivé politické manifestace, které neodmyslitelně provázely jejich fotbalové zápasy. Ve své práci popisují Francovu diktaturu a zkoumám, jaký dosah může mít politická situace na sportovní utkání a kompetitivnost těchto klubů.

## Annotation

Master's thesis „Franco years in Spain through El Clásico: FC Barcelona vs. Real Madrid“ explores the football rivalry between Real Madrid and Barcelona teams during the *franquismo*. The theme of Real Madrid, understood as a team supported and promoted by the Spanish regime, is prevailing throughout the paper. Another part describes deep cultural symbolism of FC Barcelona in Catalanian region. The last part unites those two subjects by explaining how their rivalry or *El Clásico* games, were more than just a match of football. Emotional attachments, political manifestations and historical differences always prevailed throughout their matches.

## Klíčová slova

Frankismus, diktatura, fotbal a politika, rivalita FC Barcelona proti Real Madridu, Španělsko, izolace, autoritařství, regionalismus, centralismus, media, státní televize, státní kontrola, opozice, Španělsko, izolace, autoritářský režim.

## **Keywords**

Francoism, dictatorship, football and politics, rivalry of FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid, football, regionalism, centralism, media, state television, state control, opposition, Spain, isolation, authoritarian regime.

## **Prohlášení**

1. Prohlašuji, že jsem předkládanou práci zpracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedené prameny a literaturu.
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V Praze dne 10.05.2013

Darya Vakulenko

## **Poděkování**

Na tomto místě bych ráda poděkovala mému vedoucímu práce panu PhDr. Mlejnkovi, za podnětné připomínky a odvahu vést mé nekonvenční téma diplomové práce.

Velký dík také patří mé mamince a rodině, bez jejichž podpory bych nemohla tuto práci napsat.

A musím poděkovat i Španělsku a Španělům, neboť mě svojí kulturou a historií k napsání práce inspirovali.

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Teze diplomové práce**

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na téma

**Franco years in Spain through “El Clasico”: FC Barcelona vs. Real Madrid**

Jméno: Darya

Příjmení: Vakulenko

Obor: Politologie

Konzultant: PhDr. Josef Mlejnek, Ph.D.

**Definition of the topic**

The thesis provides the research of the problem of the El Clasico – the greatest football rivalry in Spain between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid during Franco regime. The historical and nationalistic problem is the primer question of the research. The accent is made on the personal role of Franco and his regime as the catalyst of the development of the rivalry.

**Reasons for the topic**

Football and politics are interconnected more than it seems. Spain being a “football nation” with a great number of followers and supporters of this sport, has an interesting case of El Clasico - the rivalry between Real Madrid and Barcelona, which is one of the greatest in the world of football. The Franco years (1939-1975) have added and deepened the rivalry between the clubs. Real Madrid representing the center of the government and the centralized nationalistic Spanish club and the FC Barcelona a true symbol of Catalan resistance and liberty. The rivalry and symbolism continues on in the present and escalates during political conflicts nowadays. Research of the political aspect of the problem is however is not yet sufficiently available. Readers and fellow colleagues interested in the matter do not have the opportunity to access required information in one place and in a pleasant form.

**Objectives of the thesis**

- to analyze the rivalry between FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid
- to discover the influence and the role played by the authoritarian regime of Franco in the game
- to understand the symbolism behind the history of the clubs
- to research the Catalan identity representation through FC Barcelona



**Research questions**

1. What was/is reason or reasons for the great rivalry between FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid?
2. What influence had the Franco regime on the rivalry?

**Research methods**

In the research I will look into the reasons of the rivalry through the historical circumstances after 1939 or the start of the Franco rule. As well as his role and influence during various transfers of players to Real Madrid, coach decisions or championships, etc. Also I will look into the FC Barcelona representation of the Catalan nationalism during Franco's Spain period: the support base, incidents or the newspaper articles of the period.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The football or soccer, how it is called in some parts of the world, can be considered as a political and a social tool. It has the power to start wars (as it happened in the case of El Salvador and Guatemala conflict), support peace agreements, be a tool in the process of a conflict resolution, keep dictators in power, endorse certain political and economical plans, etc.

However, not until my ERASMUS semester in Madrid, the capital of Spain, I realized the power it possesses in the minds of regular citizens: the past that still drags behind them, the dreams of greater future it brings and pure devotion and passion for their team. In this thesis we research the past of Spain through the role of football. The goal of this thesis is to describe *El Clásico* phenomenon (“The Classic”), the match of Real Madrid versus Barcelona, played specifically during the Francoist Spain period. One cannot comprehend the complexity of this rivalry without understanding multiple underlying factors, such as Catalan identity and its strive for autonomy and liberty during Franco; nationalism and repression practiced by the central government and pure symbolism of the central location of the capital – Madrid.

## **OBJECT OF THE THESIS AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

The object of this thesis is to bring to readers a greater understanding of Spanish society and history during the Francoist period, through an untraditional approach to view politics through football. The goal is achieved through a thorough analysis of Francoist times: the authority of Francisco Franco, main control mechanisms of the regime, its dogma and beliefs. Then, by describing the history and functioning of two main football clubs in Spain: CF Real Madrid and FC Barcelona, as it is crucial to understand the symbolism beyond the names and locations of those two clubs. Especial attention is dedicated to the Catalan regionalism and fight for representation, as well as search for evidences of control of the

regime of Real Madrid starting from an influence within the management of the club to the assistance in international transfers of players.

Research questions have stayed the same, as they were declared in the project of the graduate thesis: "What reasons are/were for the great rivalry between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid?" and "What influence had Francoist regime on the rivalry?" The first question is answered in full throughout the thesis, as the response asks for a profound research of the history of both clubs, as well as their mutual games. The last sections of the paper, "*El Clásico*" and the overall conclusions, sum up the findings of the thesis. The second question was, however, more complex to answer as it was impossible to locate a definite answer to that question. The reason for the result could be the non-existence of a clear proclamation by Franco of his support for Real Madrid or an absolute confirmation of the regime's support of the team. Nevertheless, various written sources and actions of the government confirm its sympathies and fondness to use Real Madrid's victories in order to promote a positive image of Spain abroad. The fact is that the government benefited politically from the success of Real Madrid both inside the country, as well as on the world stage.

## **METHODOLOGY AND THE STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS**

The thesis is divided into four major parts. The first part is the most theoretical one, it concentrates on the description of the Francoist regime, especially, mainly characteristics set by Zbigniew Brezinski and Carl Friedrich. Another analysis comes from various sources on the Franco regime, such as Tusell or Fontana's work. Their detailed accounts are crucial to set the reader into the atmosphere of the discussed time frame between 1939 and 1975. Other important detail covered in the theoretical part, is the Spanish first national television program. It gave the opportunity for the government to promote its policies and distract the citizens by showing non-political programs, for example, football.

The second and third parts are more practical, as they explain the roles that *Fútbol Club Barcelona* and *Club de Fútbol Real Madrid* played during Franco. First, the identity of Real Madrid is covered, concentrating on the development of the club within the Spanish Championships, the stigma of being named the Franco's team and certain typical symbols and perceptions by the public. Next, Barcelona's team is looked upon a representative of Catalanian strives for liberty and regionalization. The team's symbols: anthem, colors and the usage of the Catalanian language, play a crucial role in the portrayal of Barça's identity.

The fourth and the last part, is the most important. It connects the historic description of the regime with the football rivalry represented by the *El Clásico* - the Classic - match between Real Madrid and Barcelona. The part is concentrated on the controversies: Di Stefano's transfer, referees, atmosphere during *El Clásico* in the stadium, etc. Moreover, the deep symbolism of those football matches goes hand in hand with political pressures and effects coming from regime.

The conclusion summarizes the knowledge and research into an account of the perception of the *El Clásico* as a part of Spanish political and sport culture. To many football fans *El Clásico* is a sign of a world class and high quality game, however few are aware of the strong symbolism and historical role that is behind it.

## CLARIFICATION OF FOOTBALL TERMINOLOGY: TEAM NAMES AND FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIPS

It is helpful to make a short introduction into some of the terms and championships that will be further referred to.

First, the names: in present time Catalan team is referred officially as Fútbol Club Barcelona. Throughout the paper other shorter names will be used: Barcelona, FC Barcelona or CF Barcelona<sup>1</sup> and finally simply Barça<sup>2</sup>. Real Madrid officially is Club de Fútbol Real Madrid and is usually shortened to Real Madrid or just Real or Madrid.

Second, the championships that those two teams took part in. The first football Championship that was established in Spain was called *Copa de Su Majestad el Rey Alfonso XII* (His Majesty King Alfonso XII's Cup) and kept its name until 1932. It was the first and only championship, prior to the establishment of *La Liga* or the League in 1928. It was the most important championship. Afterwards, during the Republic rule<sup>3</sup> the name was changed to *Copa del Presidente de la Republica* (President of the Republic Cup). During the Francoist rule, the Cup's name was changed again, this time to the Cup of Generalissimo (*La Copa de Generalísimo*) and was played throughout the season in a "knock-out style". The draw was made between top teams from the League and the second division of the League from the results of the previous season. All teams were paired and each pair played two games. Only the team with most goals continued to the next round, hence the term "knock-out style". The same procedure was repeated until only two teams were left, who played the final game, usually between May and July. This Championship was considered very exciting as it provided adrenaline, when the team could be kicked out of the Cup just after one very poorly

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<sup>1</sup> The difference is due to the change of the name in the beginning of Franco regime.

<sup>2</sup> The letter "ç" is from Catalan language, so its usage in the name of Catalan team is understandable. The Spanish version would be a simple "c" - Barca. Throughout the Catalan, the original version will be used.

<sup>3</sup> Republic of Spain was the regime from 1931 to 1939.



played game<sup>4</sup>. Moreover, because during the Francoist rule the tournament was named after the leader of the regime – Francisco Franco, Generalissimo himself awarded the cup every season to the captain of the winning team. Nowadays, the Cup is called The King's Cup (*La Copa del Rey*) and now the King is present during the final game.

The Spanish League Championship (*La Liga*) was first played in 1928-1929 season and now usually takes place from late August or early September to May or June next year. Each team plays two games against every team in the League. Three points are awarded for the victory, one point for a draw and zero to the loser. The winner is the team that finishes the season with the largest number of points. These games tend to be more exciting towards the end of the season, when there are fewer games left to play. The number of teams in the league grew from ten, to twelve in the beginning of the Francoist rule, to eighteen at the end. Currently there are twenty teams in the first division of the League. At the end of the season, three lowest teams of the first division are relegated to the second division of the League. Only three teams have never been relegated to the lower division: CF Real Madrid, FC Barcelona and Athletic Bilbao.

The last, but not less important is the European Cup. It was first called European Champion Clubs' Cup or shortened to the European Cup until 1992. Now it is called the UEFA<sup>5</sup> Champions League. Only the first, second and third best teams from the Spanish league are entitled to participate in the UEFA Champions League. Real Madrid has won nine Cups, with six during *franquismo*. The Barcelona team won none during the Francoist rule and three in total.

Note on the usage of names: As the researched subject is in Spanish, it is important to set rules for the usage of foreign terms. *El Clásico* or The Classic, referred to the match between Real Madrid and Barcelona, will be used throughout the paper in its original Spanish version.

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<sup>4</sup> In case if the opposite team scored an extremely high number of goals.

<sup>5</sup> *Union des Associations Européennes de Football* or the Union of European Football Associations.

The teams will be referred to as “Real” or “Real Madrid”. When there might arise a misunderstanding to the object of reference - CF Real Madrid will be used. In respect of Catalonian club, Barcelona or Barça are the terms that are general usage today. The Spanish League will be referred in its original name as well – *La Liga*. The decision is based on the common usage of those names by writers such as Ball, Burns and Foer.

## **STATE OF RESEARCH AND USED SOURCES**

The main part of the research was conducted in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., United States of America. The author was able to rely on the extensive book funds of the library in Spanish, English and even Catalan languages. Moreover, the archives of original newspapers from the Francoist era enabled a deeper understanding of the period and gave the author an important insight into the atmosphere and various cultural perceptions in Spain.

Nevertheless, the first on-sight practical part of the research took place in Madrid, Spain, during author’s six month stay, owing to the ERASMUS scholarship. There, the author was able to comprehend the complicated differences between fan bases and their Francoist past that still follows them and their country.

Various monographic sources were used for this thesis. In the part on theory, the original book by Zbigniew Brzezinski and Carl Friedrich, *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* was used, specifically its second edition from 1965. Their book provided insight into complicated characterization of a totalitarian regime. Then, Juan Linz’s and Alfred Stepan’s collaboration on a book *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, gave an important introduction into the Spanish dictatorial regime. The idea was later developed in Juan Linz’s book from 2000 – *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes*. There, he described

the difference between totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, and placed the Francoist Spain into the latter type.

For overall comprehension of the complicated Francoist period the book edited by Menendez Pidal, the *Encyclopedia on the History of Spai* was useful and provided historical and factual explanation of the events in the country. Also, books by Stanley Payne on *Fascism in Spain* and *Politics and Society in Twentieth-Century Spain*, as well as Paul Preston's *The Politics of Revenge* and *Spain in Crisis*, proved to be indispensable during the research and writing process.

In the section on football books specialized on football specifically in Spain or even solemnly concentrated on the subject of rivalry between Real Madrid and Barcelona were extensively used. For example, Spanish language books by Bahamonde - *El Real Madrid en la historia de España*, Fernández Santander - *Fútbol durante la Guerra civil y el franquismo*; Gómez - *La patria del gol*. As well as, *Fútbol y política en el estado Español* and González - *Cien años de leyenda 1902-2002* - the commemorative book on the history of Madrid, published for its 100th anniversary.

The books by English-speaking authors, such as *The Story of Spanish Football* by Phil Ball, *How Soccer Explains the World* by Franklin Foer, or *Soccer Against the Enemy* by Simon Kuper - all prove that there is something more to the simple game of ninety minutes. Another book, by Jimmy Burns on the history of Barcelona is a valuable source, however, it is extremely partial, and so the facts presented by Burns had to be checked.

The last but not least book to be mentioned is the *Nacidos para incordiar* by Alfredo Relaño, an experienced Spanish football journalist. Due to his diverse background<sup>6</sup> he was able to be impartial and present only facts to explain the complicated matter of this emotional sport.

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<sup>6</sup> Relaño's mother is of Catalan origin and his father is a Real Madrid fan.

## 2. THEORY

### 2.1. OVERVIEW OF THE FRANCOIST REGIME HISTORY

It is obvious that there are thousands of books on the general Francisco Franco's regime, which aim to describe and analyze the reasons, specifics and characteristics of the regime. Due to the format of this thesis, the following introduction only covers the most important milestones of the Francoist period, which ruled in Spain from 1939 to 1975. Keeping in mind that the overall goal of this paper is football and the rivalry between Barcelona and Real Madrid, the author will develop only crucial historical aspects of the *franquismo*<sup>7</sup>, which later will aid in understanding the subject of the thesis.

The end of the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), with the victory of Franco's troops, is regarded as the starting point of the regime. However, it is clear that the antagonism of "the left" and "the right" of the political spectrum, which triggered the conflict, existed in Spain also prior to the start of the Civil War. It should be mentioned that according to many, these disagreements remain in modern Spain to this day. Political struggle and clashes between "the left" and "the right", the church and secularism, the royalists and the republicans, regionalism and nationalism intertwine and inspire us to look much deeper into the problem than the current format of this thesis allows us.

Since the regime began to take shape during the war<sup>8</sup>, the military played a crucial role in politics. Adding to that, the support of the church regarded the Franco troops as a savior from the "crusade" practiced by the Republican army. (Campos 2004: 346) Moreover, the Francoist propaganda in the beginning of the regime presented itself as a solution to the internal chaos and anarchy that took place during the Republican era.

The Francoist regime was characterized by a grave level of physical and mental oppression towards its enemies: republicans, communists, socialists, Jews, masons, etc. To

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<sup>7</sup> *Franquismo* – the term for Francoism, the dictatorial rule of Francisco Franco in Spain.

<sup>8</sup> As the army was the one who started the *coup*.

understand the scope of this oppression towards the enemies of the new regime, we would have to look into the law that was published on February 9, 1939: the Law of Political Responsibilities<sup>9</sup>. The new law “was a blanket retrospective measure that criminalized anyone, who had belonged to a Republican political party or a trade union, or had supported the Republican war effort or, even, who had not actively aided the Nationalist side”. (Grugel 1997: 24) In practice, it was made possible to sentence anyone who had contacts with a person opposed to the Francoism. The real “witch-hunt” took place.

After the end of the Second World War, the Francoist regime was punished for its support of the Axis powers and was denied the financial assistance of the Marshall’s plan. The fascist Spain was excluded from the newly formed the United Nations organization, confirming serious international political isolation. However, as the time went by, the United States was the first nation to change its opinion toward Spain as it recognized the potential of a military alliance with Franco as a counter-weight to the growing influence of the Soviet Union in the Eastern Europe. The access of Spain to the Mediterranean sea and the Atlantic ocean and close proximity to Maghreb proved to be indispensable during the Cold War.

The change arrived in 1953, when the United States signed the Pact of Madrid, establishing military cooperation with Spain that allowed it to use naval and air Spanish military bases, such as the Naval Base in Rota, Cádiz. (Llera 1994: 329) This act sent a signal to other U.S. allies to end the isolation, which had finally seized in 1955, with the acceptance of Spain to the United Nations.

Following the end of political isolation, Spain was able to interact with the world market and terminate the economical isolation as well. However, there were individuals within the government with the Civil War mentality, opposed to the outside world. The only way to improve the economy and the system was to change the government from within. The much needed change took place in February 1957, when Navarro Rubio y Ullastres, a

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<sup>9</sup> *La Ley de Responsabilidad Política* is the original name in Spanish.

member of Opus Dei - a Catholic group, was named a Minister of Treasury and Commerce. (Menendez Pidal 1996: 475) Later, in 1959 the government established the Plan of Economic Stabilization and Liberalization<sup>10</sup>, which changed the “public sector, monetary policy, economic flexibility and intensifying exports.” (Menendez Pidal 1996: 475) The goal was to liberalize the Spanish economy and open it to the world markets. As a result of the reforms lead by the Opus Dei group within Franco’s government, Spanish economy grew constantly: in 1940-1950 annually by 4 percent and in 1960-1973 annually by 6.2 percent. (Menendez Pidal 1996: 483) Overall, these reforms were valued positively as they contributed to the growth of the Spanish middle class.

Further important event in Spain was the appointment of Prince Juan Carlos as a future successor of Franco on July 22, 1969. (Llera 1994: 458) According to The Law of Succession,<sup>11</sup> Franco was entitled to such a decision. The Prince, upon entering the office, was to hold the title of the King of Spain. The reason for this decision, despite Franco’s denial to see his worsening health, was the need to secure the continuance of the regime after his death. At the time the designation of the successor of Francoism *Caudillo*<sup>12</sup> was seventy-seven years old.

The death of the Spanish dictator was long and painful, just as the end of his regime. Franco was suffering from a flu caught during the celebrations of the *Día de Hispanidad*<sup>13</sup>. (Llera 1994: 661) Moreover, the successful assassination of the general Luis Carrero Blanco<sup>14</sup>, who was looked upon by Franco as an insurance of a political and military continuance of *franquismo*, had worsened his health. After November 20, 1975, when the

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<sup>10</sup> El Plan de estabilización y liberalización económica.

<sup>11</sup> *La Ley de Sucesión* in Spanish, was passed in 1947

<sup>12</sup> The Spanish term „*caudillo*“ means a political and military leader. The translation to English would be chief or leader.

<sup>13</sup> Can be translated as the Day of Spanish Heritage. Now it is a National Day of Spain, celebrated annually on October 12 with large military parade and assistance of King of Spain and the government.

<sup>14</sup> The assassination was organized by the Basque terrorist organization ETA in December 1973 in Madrid.

death of Franco was publicly announced, the start of the new era, called “Transformation”, could commence in Spain.

## **2.2. THE APPROACHES USED IN POLITICAL SCIENCE THAT DESCRIBE THE FRANCO REGIME**

In this chapter we look into the characteristics of the Francoist regime through theories of the most prominent political scientists, who researched the subject. Keeping in mind that the description of the Francoist regime itself asks for an entire thesis paper, this chapter will be dedicated solemnly to the specific characteristics of the regime. This will be helpful in the future chapters to understand the connection of those political aspects with the football.

In the authoritarian regime theory of Juan Linz, we highlight four elements that define Franco’s times: pluralism, ideology, mobilization and leadership. Each one of them hints on the important factor in determining the type of a political regime. The second part is devoted to Brzezinski’s and Friedrich’s theory, who in their description concentrated more on then totalitarian regimes, however did mention Spain. Both authors characterize the Francoist times as “a personal military dictatorship” and emphasize the importance of Franco’s figure. The last section cannot be overlooked, as it points out on interesting insights and perspectives on the regime from a British historian who devoted most of his studies on Spain, especially the Francoist regime – Paul Preston.

### 2.2.1. Juan Linz's Authoritarian Regime Theory

In order to characterize Spanish regime during Franco, it is fundamental to apply the differentiation that Juan Linz, German-Spanish political scientist, began to develop in his 1964 article "*An Authoritarian Regime: Spain.*" There, he positioned Spain during Franco between a democratic and a totalitarian regime, establishing a polity with its own internal logic and a steady regime type. Though this type was non-democratic, Linz argued that it was fundamentally different from a totalitarian regime on four key dimensions – pluralism, ideology, leadership, and mobilization. (Linz 1996: 38) Juan Linz, who spent time in Spain during 1950s and 1960s, added more specifics to those four distinctive dimensions - "limited pluralism, mentality, somewhat constrained leadership, and weak mobilization" and argued that those characteristics "could cohere for a long period as reinforcing and integrating a system that was relatively stable". (Linz 1996: 39) Or in other words, the combination of those four characteristics made the regime stable enough to maintain its existence in a long term.

Later on, Juan Linz together with Alfred Stepan researched extensively the subject and published a book - *Problems of Democratic Transition and Consolidation*, where they described main characteristics of an authoritarian regime. The main four elements are following:

**“Pluralism** – political system with limited, not responsible political pluralism. In authoritarian regimes most of pluralism had roots in society before the establishment of the regime;

**Ideology** – political system without elaborate and guiding ideology, but with distinctive mentalities;

**Mobilization** – political system without extensive or intensive political mobilization except at some points in their development;



**Leadership** – political system in which a leader or occasionally a small group exercises power within formally ill-defined, but actually quite predictable norms. Effort at cooptation of old elite groups. Some autonomy in state careers and in military.” (Linz 1996: 43-44)

Let us now concentrate on each of those definitions, first being **pluralism**. Juan Linz in his book *Totalitarian and Authoritarian Regimes* from 2000 explains important differences between these two regimes, while placing Spain into the authoritarian category. Linz defines “limited pluralism” as a crucial element that differentiates between a totalitarian and an authoritarian regime. To understand the matter, he says in democracy pluralism is unlimited; on the opposite side of the scale where there is a totalitarian system, there is no pluralism at all. (Linz 2000: 161) So he set an authoritarian regime somewhere in the middle, because it allows pluralism to some extent, however, not enough to be called a democracy.

Another Spanish political scientist, Ismael Saz Campos, in his article on fascism, points out that pluralism was still extremely limited as the “the fascists had the control of the press, official propaganda and the streets.” (Campos 2004: 347) Further on, he argues that the ideological control was strong on all levels and in all areas. For example, the education was somewhat pluralized as it escaped a direct control from the government. Nevertheless, the government gave the Catholic Church “*de facto* monopoly over primary and secondary education.” (Campos 2004: 347) As the ideology of the Catholic Church and the government were in line with each other and mutually reinforced, the usage of church’s autonomy within the Spanish authoritarian system to prove the existence of large pluralism in Spain, does not stand. Campos, however, acknowledges that the church provided some pluralism in the state-controlled system. Sadly it was another non-democratic authority.

The second element is the **ideology** – or in the case of authoritarian regimes, the lack of such. Linz argues, those regimes tend to lack a strict, state-imposed ideology, as it was the case of *franquismo*. Authoritarian regimes rather have a “mentality as a way of thinking and

feeling that is a more emotional than rational way of reacting to different situations.” (Linz 2000: 162) The choice of mentality over ideology is due to the fact that mentality provided the much needed space for a possible maneuver for the government, especially during an unexpected social or political change. Additionally, the mentality has no set of rigid rules to follow and can be possibly adjusted in a longer term. Juan Linz presented an important insight that the lack of ideological structure and historical background in authoritarian regimes forces the authorities to “search for acceptable symbols and ideas to incorporate them into their *arcana imperi*.<sup>15</sup>” (Linz 2000: 173) Further, the author provides an example of wide usage of fascism by Franco in Spain as a uniting platform for the whole nation. Additionally, football could be considered as another tool for unification and manipulation of society.

The third element is **mobilization**, which is not chiefly used by authorities; however it is crucial at defining moments of the development of the regime. For example, during the forming years of the Francoism, in November 1940 “for ten days and ten nights, a massively choreographed torch-lit procession escorted the mortal remains of the Falangist<sup>16</sup> leader José Antonio Primo de Rivera from Alicante<sup>17</sup> to the Escorial<sup>18</sup>, the resting place of the kings and queens of Spain. . . Every section of the *Falange* was involved: youth, women, syndicates, and also regular troops. All school classes and university lectures were interrupted . . . to raise their arms in the fascist salute.” (Preston 1995: 42-43) This ‘performance’ demonstrates the extent of Franco’s will to orchestrate unity and respect to the state by using high symbolism and forced mobilization.

As for the last one - **leadership**, Juan Linz argues that in authoritarian regimes one leader or a small group holds power in the whole country. *Generalísimo* Franco was an

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<sup>15</sup> Lat. Invisible power

<sup>16</sup> *Falange*, the only legal party during the Francoist rule, was founded by Primo de Rivera in 1933.

<sup>17</sup> A city on the Mediterranean coast, close to Valencia.

<sup>18</sup> A former royal residence on the outskirts of Madrid, about 30km from the capital, center of the country.

individual with grand power and until his health deteriorated in 1970's, he was a single defining force in the country. Franco held such official titles: "The Commander of the Armies, Chief of State for life, *Caudillo*, and head of the *Falange*." The Spanish leader delegated only administrative functions while retaining full personal control of the machinery of the government. (Pi-Sunyer 1977: 179) Campos adds additional importance to the image of Franco when he says that, "Franco himself emerged from his promotion as the ultimate bearer of power and as the keystone of the entire system." (Campos 2004: 347) Another Spanish historian, Llera defines Franco as one of few characteristics that the permanent throughout the existence regime, as a backbone of the system; ultimately, the regime was called *franquismo*. (Llera 1994: 62-63)

### 2.2.2. Brzezinski Theory

In their book *Totalitarian Dictatorship and Autocracy* Brzezinski and Friedrich expanded the term "totalitarian regime" to use it as a paradigm for the regime in the Soviet Union and the fascist rule in Europe prior and during the Second World War. Their book was published in 1956<sup>19</sup>, during the first stage of the Cold War. These authors (re)introduced the term "totalitarianism" to the political science and comparative theories. Due to historical circumstances, the book mainly concentrates on critiquing the Soviet Union regime; nevertheless it provides indispensable insights into main points and characteristics of a totalitarian regime.

Both authors consider Franco's Spain "a personal military dictatorship", mentioning that the regime lacked a total ideology and a strong party to sustain it. (Brzezinski 1965: 8-9) However, they do agree that "in the heyday of the Falangist party, Spain had many of the hallmarks of a totalitarian regime in the making". (Brzezinski 1965: 8-9)

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<sup>19</sup> The second edition of the book is from 1965.

Taking into consideration the well-known six characteristics of the totalitarian regime put together by Brzezinski, we can describe the Francoism. Nevertheless, the first and second<sup>20</sup> factors will be left out, as according to Brzezinski they were not present in Spain during Franco. Four other characteristics of the totalitarian control over the state include:

- a system of terror – that exercises its power through secret-police control and is directed a selected class of people (in case of Spain: left leaning population, or “the Reds”);
  - a monopoly of mass communication: press, radio, television;
  - a monopoly on the use of weapons;
  - a central control of the entire monopoly, due to coordination of corporations.
- (Brzezinski 1965: 22);

Further on, Brzezinski and Friedrich continue on applying those characteristics to the Soviet Union, which is not relevant to this paper. As Spain was not the main interest of their book, it was not further covered.

### **2.2.3. Preston’s Findings**

Paul Preston is a renowned specialist on the Spanish history and has written over nine books on Spain, including biographies of its leaders, specifically Francisco Franco and King Juan Carlos I.

Although Preston has not introduced groundbreaking political theories, as did Linz or Brzezinski, he still managed to provide deep and extremely well informed historical description of Spain. Here we will present few of his ideas, however, anyone interested in Spanish history and wishing to acquire deeper understanding of historical circumstances should not hesitate to review Preston’s writing.

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<sup>20</sup> The first characteristic is the „elaborate ideology” and the second is „a single mass party“.

As it was discussed earlier by Juan Linz, the authoritarian regime enabled existence of some pluralism within the system. However, the opposition to Franco's regime was not as strong as the opposition that we can experience today in European democracies; nevertheless, it existed to some extent. Preston in the chapter on the Anti-Francoist Opposition in his book from 1975 says that the regime "has not hesitated to strike hard and fast" against the opposition. The protests were declared to be illegal and were violently stopped. (Preston 1995: 6) This fact should be remembered, when we will be talking about FC Barcelona, as it describes the circumstances in which people were not allowed to manifest their opposite political views or disagreements with the regime.

In his later book *The Politics of the Revenge*, Preston writes about the role of the military in the politics of the Francoist regime. Specifically, he attributes the fact that Franco was very rarely challenged politically to "the power of the army within the Spanish right and devoted care to his own relationship with the military." (Preston 1995: 4)

## **2.3. CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FRANCOIST REGIME THAT ARE THE MOST RELEVANT TO THE FOOTBALL CULTURE**

### **2.3.1. Authoritarian Control**

This point was covered mostly during the part about the authoritarian theory by Juan Linz. The control formed such a large part of the regime that it is crucial to describe the fact that Franco himself "preferred an authoritarian political system above parliament and political parties." (Payne 1999: 240) Franco kept underlining that Spain would not become a totalitarian state, but would maintain a limited and traditional pluralism within the authoritarian regime. He, *Caudillo*, considered the authoritarian control as a way to keep the traditional structure of society and the historic institutions of a state. (Payne 1999: 240-241)

The number of prisoners in the post war Spain demonstrated the scale of repressions and this was the authoritarian control Franco was looking for. Four years after the end of the Civil War, when the repressions were at their highest level there were still more than 100,000 prisoners,” and additionally “of the prisoners with the longest sentences – between twelve and thirty years – 87 percent were politicians.” (Jerez-Farrán, Amago 2010: 97) In the later stages of the regime, when it was more established, it could use fear of the imprisonment as a factor in intimidating the citizens against any opposition actions.

The difference between an authoritarian regime and a totalitarian one had been already covered in the previous part on Linz’s characteristic of the Francoist times. However, it is crucial to stress the importance that the political establishment was eager to control and rule most of the spheres of society. It was not as brutal as the totalitarian period in the Soviet Union, however it does not make Francoist regime a better one.

It was characterized by this “guided pluralism” or defined and set freedom for citizens to follow and respect. Later on, only the fear of repression was enough to keep citizens under control.

### **2.3.2. Spanish Nationalism**

When talking about Spanish nationalism is it crucial to underline that we have in mind the nationalism coming from Madrid, centralist nationalism with a goal to unite Spain under one flag and one language.

Madrid, the capital and the location of all major governmental organizations during Franco was the symbol himself of a strong nationalism. Moreover, one of the most famous and commonly used mottos during *franquismo* was “Spain, one, great, and free<sup>21</sup>”.

Spanish nationalism, for Francoist supporters, was characterized by “old unpolluted ‘Castilian spirit’ with a universal language.” (Moreno 1997: 67) For Franco, any kind of

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<sup>21</sup> “*Una, Grande y Libre*” in original version, in Spanish.

regionalism, federalization or a demand for self-governing was viewed as a separatism. Payne explains that regionalism was simply viewed as a path to chaos and not a solution to Spanish various lands, so nationalism was looked upon as a unifying solution to the 'problem'. "The rationale was simply that all Spaniards should stick together, or else frightful institutional changes would occur in national life. (Payne 1964: 414)

The other important factor in forming a term 'Spanish nationalism' was the Spanish Catholic Church. The church was frightened to lose its control over Spanish society and was opposed to any institutional change in the country as it could possibly undermine its existence. As a result, a term '*Hispanidad*' was invented to direct the forces into unification under the Catholic Church. (Payne 1964: 419) In the later stages of the Francoist rule, the Catholic church, mainly in the Basque region and in Catalonia, where it to this day plays a prominent role in the society, had acquired regional specifics and had demonstrated its support for regional rights.

All in all, Spanish nationalism could be branded as an imposed phenomenon onto the Spanish society set to orchestrate the sentiments towards the state and the growth of national patriotism.

### **2.3.3. Regionalism in General and Catalonia in Particular**

The will for regionalism existed in some regions of Spain, nevertheless the centralistic efforts of the government. And the fact that those regions: the Basque country or Catalonia had cultural and language differences from the rest of Spain, it made their cause stronger for keeping their struggle to speak their own language etc. The regionalism and simple acknowledgment of the existence of various cultures within Spanish borders was impossible for Franco. Even though, he himself came from northern Spain – Galicia, where the spoken language is more similar to Portuguese than Spanish – *Caudillo* suppressed everything non-Spanish. With Franco, all non-Spanish became anti-Spanish.

Here we will dedicate some words to the region of Catalonia, the birth place of the FC Barcelona. This region in the northeastern Spain is industrialized above Spanish average. The industrial development peaked in Catalonia in late nineteenth century and provided favorable base for the rise of Catalan culture and nationalism. (Payne 1964: 409) And an increasing number of published books and newspapers in Catalan language was this tangible evidence of the rise of Catalan identity.

During the Civil War, Catalonia was mostly Republican, fighting and resisting Franco's army "until the last man." Close to the end of the Civil War, in January 1939, Franco's troops seized Barcelona. In the aftermath of the violent conflict that took over 320,000 lives, widespread repressions began of regional nationalists, republican sympathizers and everything "anti-Spain". (Cazorla-Sánchez 2005: 508-509) As Payne describes in his article from 1964, "anti-Spain" was a political propaganda invented to label any opposition to the national policies imposed by the Francoist regime. Catalonia faced harsher repressions due to its "support of the Republicans during the Civil War as well as its desire for autonomy." (Shobe 1997: 126)

Firstly, to limit Catalan identity, Franco issued a decree that proclaimed Spanish (Castilian) as the single official language of the country. For Catalan nationalists the language was the most vivid representation and paramount evidence of their difference from the Spanish culture, as well as it was a 'vehicle of a celebrated centuries-old literary tradition'. (Rees 1996: 313) Hence, Franco's post civil war attack on Catalonia was through culture and specifically – the language. "The government shut down seven daily newspapers in Catalan, prohibited business cards in Catalan and children had to be christened only with Castilian names." (Rees, p.314) *Caudillo* considered imposition of Castilian on Catalans as a primary element to push for an absolute and single national identity.

For all the reasons mentioned above, regionalism was not an option in the Francoist Spain, as it was regarded as "a political phenomenon that has become obsolete thanks to the



*Caudillo* and the national sacrifice.” (I.A.L. 1956: 407) It is evident that regionalism during Franco was strongly suppressed and citizens did not have the possibility to protest against the authoritarian rule of *Caudillo* in now obvious manner through protests on the streets, demonstrations or petitions.

### **3. CF REAL MADRID**

The football club that celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2002 has a long history and multiple important and memorable events that would be worth mentioning. However, the goal of this paper is not to retell a complete history of Real Madrid from 1902 to present day. Hence, the following section will discuss only the most relevant events in Real Madrid's history to the subject of the thesis in order to aid readers in understanding the club's essence.

The first part introduces the historical period of the Real Madrid club prior to the dictatorship of Franco: the beginnings, transformation into a professional football club and main characteristics of it. Further on, we concentrate on events in the club during Francisco Franco rule, from 1939 to 1975, especially highlighting the role of Santiago Bernabéu (the longest serving President of the club) and iconic games of Real Madrid throughout the era. The most important part intends to answer the question whether Real Madrid was in fact chosen to represent the Spanish dictatorial regime. As one can see, the main goal of the third part of the thesis is not to present the history of Real Madrid as a simple timeline of events, but to introduce to the reader useful and sufficient amount of information that will later help to comprehend the main part of the thesis, which concentrates on the subject of *El Clásico* itself.

#### **3.1. SHORT HISTORY PRIOR TO 1939**

The history of Real Madrid officially started on April 22, 1902, when the club was signed into the Registry of Associations. (González 2002: 20; Bahamonde 2002: 25) However, the club had been operating before that date. The official 100th anniversary book, published by the Real Madrid Foundation, states that the first official meeting of the directors of "Madrid Foot Ball Club" took place on March 2, 1902.

Curiously enough, the official anniversary book does not mention the fact that two founders of the club, brothers Juan and Carlos Padrós, were of Catalan origin; in other words,

they had the same background as Real's longest adversary – FC Barcelona. It is interesting to note that other authors also avoid this fact (Bahamonde 2002: 17). It is clear that the rivalry between Real Madrid and Barcelona is maintained through various descriptions of the history of these clubs.

The brothers Padrós were born to Catalan parents, but grew up in the Spanish capital. They lived permanently in Madrid and owned a retail business there. One of the brothers - Juan Padrós, was the President of Real Madrid from 1904 to 1908.

It must be highlighted that at that moment football was not as nearly popular in Spain as it is today. Then, the main sport was *corrida*<sup>22</sup> and only few people knew the rules of the new sport. Football arrived to Spain from England in late nineteenth century through port cities of northern Spain and Barcelona, and also with the return of sons of the wealthy Madrid families from British schools. To confirm that we use Ball's affirmation that Real's origins come from "club Football Sky that was founded in 1895 as a sporting pastime for students at the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (Open Teaching College) who had been together at Oxford and Cambridge from 1891 to 1894." (Ball 2011: 123)

The club continued to grow and gain followers. By 1910 it leased part of a land in the Northern part of Madrid, where new O'Donnell field was established. By 1912 it had not more than 450 members.(Ball 2011: 124) The same year Santiago Bernabéu began his life journey in Real Madrid: first, as a player for twelve football seasons, then stayed on as a club's delegate and continued as a coach to finally become club's longest-serving president for thirty-five years. (González 2002: 51)

To measure the interest towards football and the popularity Real Madrid in particular, it is useful to point out the number of spectators that attended of Real Madrid's games. Nevertheless, the number of viewers of Madrid games prior to the end of the civil war in 1936 is difficult to estimate, as there is no officially confirmed data. However, Bahamonde

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<sup>22</sup> Bullfighting.

in his book on the history of Real Madrid mentions that at average of about 1.500 to 2.000 spectators were present during majority of the matches. (Bahamonde 2002: 31)

Today, many mention the connection of the Madrid club to the regime, in fact; they argue that the club preferred to be associated with the ruling sphere on multiple occasions. The first most commonly used example of such a connection, took place even before Franco's rule, when the club accepted the title "Real" or "Royal" from the hands King of Spain Alfonso XIII. The royal patronage was officially awarded on June 29, 1920. (González 2002: 67) However, Real Madrid was not the first club to hold the title "Real," but as a well known Spanish football correspondent says "it put grand importance to it." (Relaño 2012: 41) It was a symbolic act of being connected to the major institution of the Kingdom.

Another important development was the inauguration of a new stadium in May 1924 in a district called Chamartín. The location was chosen a bit far from the center of the city at that time, as Chamartín was not yet a part of Madrid-city, but a village itself. The location and the size of the stadium presented a certain confirmation of a great potential for growth of the number of fans of Real Madrid. "The stadium would accommodate as much as 16.000 spectators, later in thirties it would be enlarged to 22.000 spectators." (Bahamonde 2002: 64) It is true, after the construction of the new stadium - the number of spectators grew constantly, presenting Real Madrid with the much needed financial stability and support. (Bahamonde 2002: 45) It is obvious to conclude that the stadia play crucial rule in the world of football. The transition into professional football team came with the purchase of José María Peña for 6,000 pesetas in 1926, which prepared the team for the rivalry in the league. (Ball 2011: 124)

**Table 1. The League and the Cup Titles of Real Madrid (1902-1939)**

<u>La Liga</u>	<u>The Cup</u>
	1905
	1906
	1907
	1908
	1917
1932-1932	
1932-1933	
	1934
	1936

Source:LinguaSport

As it can be seen from the table, the first years of the Cup were very successful for Real Madrid, as the team was able to win the competition four consecutive times and to establish its initial glory in the Spanish football. After almost fifteen years with no results, finally in 1930/1932 season, Real started its notorious habit of spending astronomical sums of money on acquiring famous, already accomplished players, rather than training them from their childhood in its own football school. Back then Real Madrid bought Ricardo Zamora, Quincoces, Ciriaco and Olivares for unprecedented 210,000 pesetas. It is curious to mention that Ricardo Zamora was purchased from Barcelona. As it is visible from the table above, after that a successful period for Madrid commenced and the team was undefeated for two seasons. (Ball 2011: 124)

## **3.2. HISTORY POST 1939 TO 1975**

### **3.2.1. Stadium and Other Symbols**

The stadium of a football team represents more than what meets an eye at the first glance. As Hunter Shobe points out in his dissertation on *Place, Identity and Futbol Club Barcelona* from 2005, the location of the stadium should be looked in a direct connection to other places in the area, as it expresses the unification with the location and a special bond. (p.91, Shobe) For example, in Madrid the distinction is clear, however, it is a rough

generalization: Real Madrid's stadium is located in the upscale northern part of the city and "no other football club in the world can boast such esteemed address." (Ball 2011: 121) On the other hand, Atlético de Madrid's, another important team in the capital, stadium is located in the south-western part of the city that is considered a blue-collar neighborhood. This generalized perception has remained with the team, and has eventually come to be regarded as a characterization of a whole group.

The club's first real stadium, Campo O'Donnell was located on the corner of O'Donnell and Narvaéz streets. (Ball 2011: 124) It was still an early stage of the development of the club, it was 1912. The stadium was also very simple: wooden stand for about 200 spectators and perimeter fences. The club at that time had overall about 450 members, what was not a little number. Then came already mentioned stadium for 16.000 spectators from May 1924.

The initial idea to build a new stadium for Real Madrid came in 1943 with the arrival Santiago Bernabéu as a new President, and already on October 27, 1944 the construction commenced with Bernabéu himself symbolically tapping the first foundation. (Fernandez 2000: 87; González 2002: 126) The land off the Castilian's mall<sup>23</sup> was not a simple acquisition, nevertheless, thanks to Bernabéu's connections with the banking executives, "he was already a drinking buddy of the director of the Banco Exterior and was a personal friend of Adolfo Suárez, later to become the country's prime minister," the task seemed easier. (Ball 2011: 130) As Ball continues, the purchase of the land and the financing of the stadium was secured on very favorable terms for the Real Madrid club.

The tender to build the stadium was won by the same company that had built El Vale de los Caídos, the monument to the victims of the Civil War, built by political prisoners of the Franco regime. The construction was programmed to take place in two stages. The first was finished in 1947, when the new stadium Chamartín was opened. Later, the second stage was

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<sup>23</sup> The Castilian's mall or *Paseo de la Castellana* is the widest and could be considered one of the most prestigious addresses, connecting the city from North to the South, passing through the very center of the city. However, during the Francoist times the avenue was called Avenida del Generalísimo or the avenue of Generalissimo.

planned to increase the capacity of the stadium and did not commence until 1953. (González 2002: 129) When the stadium opened, it was the largest stadium in Europe with space for about 75.000 spectators. (González 2002: 139) The goal to convert Madrid-city and Real Madrid into the center of Europe's attention, at least with the construction of a grand stadium, was achieved. Afterwards, it was time to win Championships.

Due to the stadium's size and favorable relations between Bernabéu and Franco, the stadium was often used for the regime's events, such as for the 1st of May demonstrations of the syndicates. (Carreño 2003: 51) Moreover, as Burns points out, „for the remaining twenty-seven years of Franco's rule, the final of the Generalissimo's Cup would be played there, with the exception of three years...” (Burns 1999: 156)

The last symbolic event in the history of the Real Madrid's stadium happened on January 4, 1955, when the stadium was renamed after its current<sup>24</sup> president Santiago Bernabéu. The club's assembly decided to “recognize the work of the present president.” (González 2002: 164)

Another important symbol for any team is the color of its jersey – this color remains the team's trademark for the whole season but more often “sticks” for decades. That is even more a case for Real Madrid, which kept its initial white color throughout of all its hundred years of history. Moreover, it feels like Real will continue wearing it for the rest of its existence. The story goes that Arthur Johnson, the first professional coach of the team, picked white for the shirts as it reminded him on his favorite team back at home in England. (Ball 2011: 205) Because of its white shade, Real Madrid players are often called now - *merengues* or *meringue*.

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<sup>24</sup> When talking about the Francoist period.

### 3.2.2. The Team in International Championships

Although this paper is dedicated to research and explains only the influence of football within Spain and Spanish society, nevertheless, Real Madrid was very successful, almost legendary on the international scene, during the Francoist years. It is hard not to mention its victories, same as the lack of such from Barcelona in the next section.

Real Madrid won the first European Cup<sup>25</sup> in 1956 and will be remembered forever as such. Moreover, the later five consecutive victories cemented Real's legend in the European Cup. The first final of the European Cup was played in Paris on June 13, 1956, as French sports newspaper *L'equipe* organized the whole championship. Real Madrid was the only Spanish team qualified to play in the European competition, as only the winner of the home league was allowed to participate. Fortunately, Real Madrid won the 1954/1955 Spanish League and secured itself the debut participation. Interestingly enough, Barcelona finished second in that year's League, five points behind Real.

In the 1955/1956 European Cup in the final game, it must be said, Real Madrid played against French team – Stade de Reims. After the first half, the score was 2-2, but Real managed to pull off a victory with the final score 4-3. The next season, Real Madrid finished third in the Spanish League, and logically was not allowed to participate, nevertheless, the rules allowed the title holder to be included. Other Spanish teams, such as Atlético de Bilbao finished the League first and had a chance to play, while FC Barcelona was second.

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<sup>25</sup> Now it is called European Championship, UFFA Championship.



**Table 2. The European Cup victories of Real Madrid (1955-1975)**

<u>Real Madrid</u>
1955/1956
1956/1957
1957/1958
1958/1959
1959/1960
1965/1966

Source: LinguaSport

With Real Madrid's first victories, the regime had realized "its [Real Madrid's] potential for propaganda and immediately started 'the machine' at its service." (Carreño 2003: 50) The club provided the opportunity to give a new image to the country – victorious in sports and popular with public. It was the best public campaign the regime could ask for. Just as the minister of exterior, Fernando de Castiella, declared that "Real Madrid was the best ambassador we have ever had." (Carreño 2003: 50)

Real Madrid during *franquismo* managed to win the European Cup six times, more than any other team. Also it finished once, in 1963/1964 second. The victories of Real Madrid on the international stage are widely considered to have brought Spain out of the post-second World War political isolation. The team was called "the most valuable ambassador for the country." (Ball 2011: 126) As Antonio Ruiz concludes, "there is no absolute doubt that Real Madrid, after winning the European Cup six times, improved the image of Spanish Francoist state abroad." (Ruiz 2010: 160)

The role of Real Madrid on international politics will be discussed in a closer detail in the last part on *El Clásico*.

### 3.2.3. The Role of Santiago Bernabéu

Santiago Bernabéu was the longest serving president of Real Madrid and to this day he symbolizes club's historic glory: he set up the European Cup and Real Madrid was the first team to win it, he oversaw the construction of the club's current stadium and secured Di Stéfano's transfer, among other things.

In 1912, Santiago Bernabéu started with Real Madrid as its player and continued through 1927. During the Civil War, he took the side of the Nationalists and "had been forced to flee to Paris from the gates of Chamartín<sup>26</sup> after having been threatened by several of the club's republican committee members." (Ball 2011: 129) Santiago Bernabéu never forgot the treatment he received from the club's committee members.

Later, during the Civil War, Bernabéu joined the forces of the Franco's forces as a young cadet and fought on the Catalan front. He said, "I was in the reconquest of Catalonia, the reconquest of an independent Catalonia for the greater glory of Spain." (Burns 1999: 155-156) It is very likely that from that war period in Catalonia he developed his apathy towards this region. Much later, in the summer of 1968, he declared to a Valencia newspaper: "It is not correct that I do not like Catalonia. I like it and I admire it a lot. Except Catalonians." (Carreño 2003: 54) He had great love for Spain and everything Spanish, as long as it was Castilian Spanish.

Bernabéu had been decorated in the Civil War for services to the Nationalistic cause" (Ball 2011: 128) After the Civil War Bernabéu came back to "the football family" and became the Club's President in 1943, the position he held until his death in 1978. It is very common to draw parallels of Bernabéu's presidency and the Franco's regime, partly because of a large overlap of their "rule" – Franco gained power in 1939 and died in 1975.

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<sup>26</sup> Chamartín – this is the name of the district in Madrid, where Real Madrid's stadium is located now. The stadium was called Chamartín, before being renamed to Santiago Bernabéu stadium.

To this day there are speculations of how close Santiago Bernabéu was to Francisco Franco. We can only wonder whether Bernabéu received direct favors from Franco's government or whether the Spanish leader had any influence in the decisions taken by the club.

The first board meeting under the presidency of Bernabéu is, however, very representative of the Franco era, as it included Colonel, future minister of treasury and the general director of prisons. (Fernández 2000: 86) As it follows from the list of attendees, the influence of the government, especially of the representatives of punitive agencies, directed to the club, is obvious and eventually led to a dramatic change of the perception of the club. Additionally, more controversy and suspicion was added as Bernabéu had named the General Sáenz de Buruaga, who happened to be an intimate friend of Franco, an honorary President of the club. (Fernandez 2000: 87)

In the spring of 1955 Santiago Bernabéu supported an early project of a respectable French sports newspaper *L'Equipe* to organize a European competition of football where the champions from European countries would play against each other. Because of his early engagement with the project, Bernabéu was named a vice-president of its committee. (Relaño 2012: 156) Some connect Real Madrid's first five consecutive victories of this Championship with Bernabéu's involvement in its set up and initial organization.

So was Santiago Bernabéu a fascist? Did he regard Real Madrid's as victories of his regime? We would have to answer affirmatively to those two questions. As Carreño puts it, "It would be a mistake to separate Santiago Bernabéu and Francisco Franco." (Carreño 2003: 47) Also Shaw says that "Bernabéu was the Francoist, but he did not have any necessity to follow the methods of Generalissimo." (Shaw 1985: 60) This quote answers negatively the question of whether Bernabéu was ordered to become part of the dictatorial regime.

Real Madrid's President was happy to represent the club that was supported by the Francoist regime and *Caudillo* himself. After the second final game of the European cup was

played in Madrid (Madrid won for the second consecutive time), Franco has given the Cup to Madrid's captain, Bernabéu exclaimed: "I am so enormously happy! The moment when I saw Generalissimo, so pleased with the match, so pleased with our stadium, so pleased with everything. I cannot describe my satisfaction with words!" (Fernández 2000: 152) We could assume that for Santiago Bernabéu, the experienced warrior of the Civil War, the football was the continuation of war through different tool – football. His apathy towards Catalonia could be satisfied in Real Madrid victories over its eternal rival.

The Spanish newspaper *El País* has written on the death of Bernabéu: "It must be said that Real Madrid was more than the team of the regime and Bernabéu was a man supported by the same regime, it was the regime that was taking advantage of the team. The powerful team was a propaganda material . . ." (Fernández 2000: 156) And it concludes that Bernabéu followed the rules of this complicated political game.

#### **3.2.4. Was it the Club of Francisco Franco?**

Raimundo Saporta, longtime manager of Real Madrid, said about the role of Real Madrid: "Real Madrid is and was political. It was always so proud to be at the service as the backbone of the state. When it was founded, in 1902, it respected Alfonso XIII, and in 1931 – the Republic, in 1939 – Generalissimo, and now it respects His Majesty Juan Carlos. Because the club is disciplined and abides royally to the institution that controls the state." (Relaño 2012: 49)

The following section is one of the most important as it looks into the links of the football team to the official political regime during the Francoist period in Spain. Simultaneously, the part is also the most controversial one, as there are no official declarations of Franco of taking Real Madrid under "his wing" or placing the club in a

preferable position. Nevertheless, this it will present various facts and examples that give support to the notion that Real Madrid was indeed a club supported at times by the regime.

Ball in his very informative book on Barça, which unfortunately is extremely favorable only towards the Catalanian team, suggested calling Real Madrid “El Regime Team” rather than simply “El Dream Team”. For the purpose of this academic paper it is crucial to concentrate on the facts and subdue emotions or partiality towards any team.

The events of 1955/1956 could be used as an example of government’s partiality towards Real. On July 18, 1955 the governmental decree awarded the state medal of Yoke and Arrows to the eleven players of Real Madrid. The timing is suspicious, as during that season Real Madrid won only the *La Liga* Championship, however few years earlier, in 1951, FC Barcelona has won the same Championship and did not receive any medals from the government. (Fernandez 2000: 151) The followers of the conspiracy theory go as far as to hint the possibility that Franco already “knew” or had a plan of Real Madrid winning the newly established European Champions Clubs’ Cup or European Cup that Madrid team played for the first time in upcoming 1955/1956 season.

Nevertheless, it was crucial for the regime to improve its image abroad and the victories of Real Madrid provided a perfect base for it. “Real Madrid’s outrageous run of success acted as an invaluable ambassador for the country, lending it a sheen that hid a more prosaic and even grim reality. Franco had seen that football could be used to sway public opinion during the hard times and spread an image abroad of a nation of stylish achievers worthy of being allowed back into the international fold.” (Ball 2011: 126)

Another fact that provides an interesting insight on how the government treated Real Madrid was the speech pronounced in 1959 by the minister of the Movement, José Solís: „You [addressed to Bernabeu] have done much more than the ambassadors of our country. The people that hated us – now understands us, because of you, you broke a lot of walls (...). Your victories represent a rightful pride for all Spaniards . . .“ (Fernández 2000: 154) This part

confirms the idea that the regime comprehended the possibility to use Real Madrid to improve the negative political perception of Spain abroad. It looked upon the team as a way to „erase“ the fascist stigma and negative past of the Civil War with brutalities of franquismo.

**Table 3. The League and the Cup Titles of Real Madrid (1939-1975)**

<u>La Liga</u>	<u>The Cup</u>
	1946
	1947
1953/1954	
1954/1955	
1956/1957	
1957/1958	
1960/1961	
1961/1962	1962
1962/1963	
1963/1964	
1964/1965	
1966/1967	
1967/1968	
1968/1969	
	1970
1971/1972	
	1974
1974/1975	1975

Source: LinguaSport

The power of Real Madrid and of football was not only used to improve the image of Spain abroad, but also inside the country itself. It was widely considered that citizens are easier to control when they are critiquing their players and unsuccessful matches rather than closely following and critiquing policies and politicians. Fernández agrees in his book, when he says that not only Madrid, but even other teams were used by the regime to “centralize the emotions of the working class and keep them away from the politics.” (Fernández 2000: 156)

However, there is an exception that contradicts all the conspiracy theories: “Madrid won virtually nothing between 1932 and 1954.” (Ball 2011: 127) In fact, they only won the highly disputable 1943 Cup of Generalissimo, which will be discussed to its full length in the

*El Clásico* section of this paper. So, in the first fifteen years of the Franco regime Real Madrid won only three Spanish titles. However, the crucial change came with the transfer of Di Stéfano: his game brought the success that was needed as air for the “regime’s team.”

The media and central government attention to Real Madrid cannot be forgotten. “For these numerous receptions of Real Madrid, always with Santiago Bernabéu present, in Franco’s *El Prado* or in the *Ciudad Deportivo*.<sup>27</sup>” (Carreño 2003: 53)

The most complete description of Franco’s influence over Real Madrid club comes from Duncan Shaw, who concludes that “it is probably true that the majority of fans were Francoist as well, but there are no ways to confirm that; Real Madrid was a club supported by *Caudillo* and a majority of his ministers, and were proud of that; the Club did not dominate the Spanish Federation of Football and did not enjoy systematic partiality of referees; Real Madrid was conscious [of all this] and was proud to be the ambassador of the Regime.” (Shaw 1998: 60)

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<sup>27</sup> Ciudad Deportivo – Sport’s City – the official name of the training complex of Real Madrid.

#### 4. FC BARCELONA

The motto of Football Club Barcelona is “Més que un club” (“More than a club” in English) and over the years the actions of the club have confirmed that this motto is more than a simple marketing. The club is located in the port city of Barcelona in Catalonia, a prosperous region in Northeast Spain. FC Barcelona is in many ways a personification of Catalan culture. For example, nowadays both club’s president and the coach are fluent in Catalan and in public speak mainly Catalan, the museum of Barça has more visitors than the city’s Picasso museum, and the jersey of Barça for the next season is rumored to be a stylized version of Catalan flag.

The introduction starts with a description of the formative years of Barça prior to the Franco era that commenced in 1939, similar to the structure of the previous section on Real Madrid. It then continues through the *franquismo* period to describe how the dictatorial regime forced the Barcelona team and club to take, for example, a different team name. Further, we discover the importance of the stadium of Barça and analyze the role of the Fútbol club Barcelona<sup>28</sup> within the nationalistic Catalonian region, and furthermore how the club came to be somewhat representative of the region’s struggle for independence within the dictatorial and centralized Spain. Jimmy Burns points out in his book on Barça, a very important aspect of team’s identity: “one cannot begin to understand the phenomenon of Barça outside of context of Catalonia’s relationship with the rest of Spain.” (Burns 1999: 9) In the last stage of the Francoist regime, in 1968, Barça’s newly adopted motto “more than a club” could not be more appropriate.

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<sup>28</sup> This is how the club is originally called in Spanish. In English it would be Football Club Barcelona, hence, the abbreviation FC Barcelona.



#### 4.1. HISTORY PRIOR TO 1939

The FC Barcelona fans never tire of asserting that their club was founded by a Swiss, Joan Gamper, underlining the cosmopolitan, welcoming, and open character of the club and the region. His real name was Hans Kamper, but he adopted a Catalan version of it when he finally installed in Barcelona permanently in 1898. Gamper was a businessman “who made his fortune trading in sugar, coffee and cinnamon” but back in his native Switzerland, he played football and was eager to introduce the game to his new home city. (Burns 1999: 76) So on October 22, 1899 he placed an announcement in a local newspaper, *Los Deportes*, inviting eager players to organize games of football in Barcelona. The backbone of the team was created.

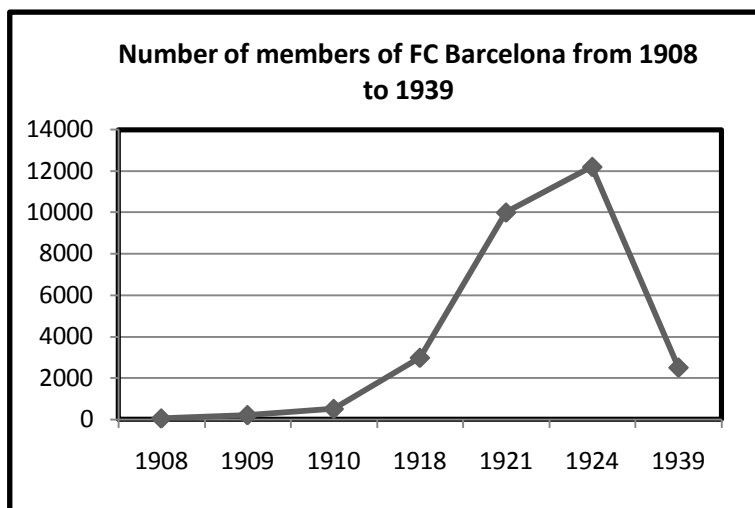
It is also said that Joan Gamper considered the new club’s mission to be a representative of the Catalan culture within Spain and the world. So, under his presidency, “Barça adopted a crest containing the colors of the nation and the cross of St. Jordi, Catalonia’s patron.” (Foer 2010: 200)

The following tables demonstrate the success of Barcelona before Franco came to power. The victories of the club are directly proportional to the number of members of the club. For example, in 1910 club had 500 members, then in 1921 the number increased to 10,000. It is largely attributed to the presence of football stars Samitier and Zamora. Moreover, the 1920s are called the first “golden age of the club,” it was the period when the club was most successful and was able to dominate the Spanish Cup. (Ball 2011: 98)

**Table 4. The League and the Cup Titles of FC Barcelona (1902-1939)**

<u>La Liga</u>	<u>The Cup</u>
	1910
	1912
	1920
	1922
	1925
	1926
	1928
1929	

Source: LinguaSport

**Table 5. Number of members of FC Barcelona (1908-1939)**

Sources: FC Barcelona website and Ball

With the arrival of the Primo de Rivera dictatorship in 1923, Barcelona faced various restrictions as a part of a centralized effort to contain Catalan culture. “The restrictions placed on FC Barcelona by the dictatorship included a ban on the use of the Catalan flag in the stadium, the registration with the police of all membership files, and the obligatory use of the Spanish language in all club’s announcements and communication.” (Burns 1999: 97)

Every Barça fan knows the dramatic event that took place in June 1925. A friendly match was organized in Barça’s Les Courts stadium against Jupiter, as homage to Orfeó Català, a Catalan choir that had just returned from a successful international tour. (Relaño 2012: 43) It is often said that Orfeó Català and FC Barcelona are the most prominent symbols

of Catalonia, so having them both widely and openly presented in a stadium was too much to take for the dictatorial regime back in 1925. Moreover, when the visiting English band played *Marcha Real*, the official Spanish national anthem, it was booed by the whole stadium, while the British anthem was received with ovation. (Foer 2010: 201; Relaño 2012: 43)

The fact that the event occurred during the rule of the right-wing dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, an inspirational figure to Francisco Franco himself, made it certain that the repercussions towards the football club would be harsh. Even then Barça played an important political and social role in Catalonia, which ensured that the punishment would be highly symbolic and would send a strong message against any further Catalanian “nationalist provocations.” As a result of booing of the Spanish anthem during the game, the stadium was closed for a year, later negotiated down to six months, and the club’s directors were fined. Additionally, the regime ordered Gamper, Barça’s President, to leave the country. (Foer 2010: 201)

Josep Suñol was the last president of FC Barcelona during the period prior to 1939. He too had prominent nationalistic Catalanian views and high public visibility. In 1933, Suñol was elected to the Spanish central parliament, *Las Cortes*, as a deputy of the Catalanian political party, Esquerra Republica<sup>29</sup>. Two years later he was elected to the position of the President of FC Barcelona but his rule was short due to the start of the Civil War, when the organization of the club had to adjust to the crisis in the country.

Suñol is the first victim that fans of Barcelona mention when describing the Spanish Civil War and the brutalities committed by Francoist army against Catalonia. On July 19, 1936, the President of Barcelona left by car to Madrid. “Suñol’s journey south appears to have been strictly political: to meet and talk to like-minded Republicans...” who surrounded the capital. (Burns 1999: 108)

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<sup>29</sup> Esquerra Republica (Republican Left) – leftist political party in Catalonia, strongly opposed to the monarchy. The party is still active in Catalonia and in the last Catalanian regional elections in November 2012 obtained almost 14percent of the votes.

Suñol disappeared in Guadarrama the Mountains, close to Madrid. As multiple investigations point out “he [Suñol] was detained and subsequently shot dead, late in the day of August 6, 1936”, by Francoist troops.” (Burns 1999: 109) The new regime, specifically the Catalan headquarters of the Falange in Barcelona, issued a report that stated: “For a time he [Josep Suñol] was president of Barcelona football club, and was responsible for the clear anti-Spanish line which the club adopted.” (Burns 1999: 110-111) As the assassination took place in the early stages of the Civil War, the situation was quite chaotic and shifts of power within various areas occurred rapidly.

After the death of Suñol, the club faced the harsh reality of the Civil War. The invitation to tour Mexico and play six matches in 1937 was a real “savior” and considering poor financial situation of the club, the payment of \$15.000 U.S. dollars was a great motivator. (Fernandez 2000: 25) The tour continued to the United States of America, where Barcelona played four more matches. In September, after a total of fourteen games played across the Atlantic, four options were offered to the players: “1. Go back to Republican Catalonia: chosen by the coach and four players. 2. Stay in exile in Mexico: accepted by nine players. 3. Exile in France: chosen by three players. 4. Come back to the Francoist zone: was chosen by none.” (Fernandez 2000: 26) It is obvious that the players understood the severity of the possible repercussions of belonging to a Catalan football club, especially considering the extremely polarized political and social situation in Spain at the end of the Civil War. It demonstrates how the team was looking for any option to survive and keep the legacy of Barcelona alive. The returnees were banned from playing for FC Barcelona for two years.

## 4.2. HISTORY POST 1939 TO 1975

### 4.2.1. Change of the Name and Prohibition of Catalan Symbols during the Francoist Rule

In order to understand the political climate in Spain at that time, it is important to remember that after the Civil War the country was in ruins, it was set back for decades in its economical and social development. The left-leaning fragment of the Spanish society was viewed with widespread suspicion; moreover, it suffered violent repression, persecution, and execution<sup>30</sup>. The enemies of the regime were well-defined: leftist ideology (socialism, communism), Masonic rule and regionalism (both language and culture that was not Castilian Spanish).

The first final of the Spanish Cup, now referred to as the Cup of Generalissimo, after the end of the Civil War took place in Barcelona in June 25, 1939. Symbolism of this could not be more apparent. "The memories of the entry of the Francoist troops into the Catalan capital [in January 1939] were still fresh. That day, the Montjuich stadium was full of the military personnel who were there to witness the game of Sevilla against Ferrol, the native town of Franco. You could not ask for more. Before the game the falangist anthem was played and both players and audience greeted each other with the fascist salute with the right arm raised." (Gómez 2007: 45) In such environment a new football season has commenced for Barcelona under the new political rule.

Foer writes that Franco insisted on changing the name from "Football Club Barcelona" to "Club de Football Barcelona", because the former was the Catalan version and was unacceptable during the most part of *franquismo*. Moreover, the Catalan flag was removed from the team's crest. (Foer 2010: 203) The first visible change in the Barcelona club in the beginning of the Franco era was the change of its name from FC Barcelona to CF

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<sup>30</sup> The suspicion and social tensions between the right and the left persist in some parts of Spain to this day.

Barcelona. Although it might seem insignificant difference, the small change represents a symbolic control of the central government over the country with the goal to eradicate all things “not Castilian.”

Another profound change in the functioning of Barça was a new rule where the central government would appointment all future Barcelona presidents. (Carreño 2003: 47) As the official website of FC Barcelona explains, after the Civil War “the Franco regime ordered the creation of a management committee to take charge of the running of the Club.” It is easy to deduct that the government of Franco would never appoint someone who would not possess the trust of *Caudillo* and be prepared to follow all his “whims.” So in this Committee, during 1939, “were three directors chosen by the regime, whose job was to exercise strict control over all activities of Barcelona FC.” (FC Barcelona official website, 2013) According to the official website of the club, from 1940 to 1943, with a short break in 1942, Enrique Piñeyro, an aristocrat closely connected to the Franco regime that had no connection to the club was appointed as its president. The next president possessed similar qualities, Josep Vendrell, who held the top executive post in FC Barcelona from 1943 to 1946 and was moreover an army colonel, who fought on Franco’s side in the Civil War. After a series of long negotiations, from 1947 Barcelona’s president was elected by its members, however, the governmental control persisted through limitations of only selected members who could vote. Before the Civil War and in present time, FC Barcelona takes great pride in its open and democratic way to elect the club’s administration officials. All *socios* or members of the Club are expected to cast their vote of top officials of the club.

**Table 6. The League and the Cup Titles of FC Barcelona (1939-1975)**

<u>La Liga</u>	<u>The Cup</u>
	1942
1944/1945	
1947/1948	
1948/1949	
1951/1952	1952
1952/1953	1953
1958/1959	1959
1959/1960	
	1963
	1968
	1971
1973/1974	

Source: LinguaSport

The arrival of the Francoist regime is not as apparent on the results of FC Barcelona. They won the league in 1945 and later in 1948 and 1949. Later, the team was able to secure two more league titles, before Di Stéfano arrived to Madrid in 1953 and made Barcelona's success harder to achieve. The 1960s were the darkest years for FC Barcelona. The theory is that the Francoist rule needed the rivalry of FC Barcelona for Real Madrid, it was a symbolic game. The regime needed FC Barcelona as much it needed Real Madrid. They simply had different role to play. That theory will be discussed in the last section of the *El Clásico* part.

The team's colors deserve a short note. The well-known color of the team – *azulgrana* – is difficult to translate, as *azul* means blue, but *grana* is cochineal. Nevertheless, it is seen as “blue and maroon” colors. (Ball 2011: 95) The shirts in those two colors were first spotted during 1900 game against a local Catalan team. As the official website of the club explains, “half of the shirt was blue and the other claret, the sleeves were opposite colors and the shorts were white.” In spite of various changes and time, Barcelona still plays in *azulgrana* shirts and the press often refers to the team as *azulgrana*.

#### **4.2.2. Regional rivalry with RCD Español**

The rivalry against Real Madrid was not the only hardship for Barcelona. There is a regional rivalry that exists in Catalonia, even to this day. The RCD Español, today RCD Espanyol, was founded just about year after Barcelona. Espanyol always was very different from Barcelona, as its name suggests, the club did not connect itself to the Catalan region, but to country: Spain or España.

“Espanyol assumed the full title of Real Club de Fútbol and made King Alfonso XIII its patron. The juxtaposition of royalty to Spain and the Castilian language reflected a social reality that in the city of Barcelona, there were monarchists and Spanish-speakers who wanted to go on living in a part of Spain and not become separate from it.” (Burns 1999: 85) In its beginning period, Espanyol had only Spanish born players, to the contrast to cosmopolitan Barcelona team. Moreover, the club’s stadium was located in the working-class neighborhood and characterized itself as a blue collar team. The founding message of the club read: “We create this club to compete with the foreigners of FC Barcelona.” (Ball 2011: 90)

A curious situation occurred in the 1940s, when Barcelona experienced an economic revival and saw a large immigration wave from the South of Spain settle in Catalonia. Those working-class immigrants, in order to accommodate faster to the Catalan culture, sided with FC Barcelona rather than Espanyol. (Ball 2011: 92)

Nevertheless, Espanyol’s very existence was increasingly seen as a crude insult to Catalan nationalists who supported Barcelona, making encounters between the two teams a recipe for division and violence. (Burns 1999: 85)



#### 4.2.2. The new Stadium – Nou Camp

The first stadium was named Les Corts. It “commissioned a powerful symbol that FC Barcelona had outdistanced Espanyol in terms of its support.” (Burns 1999: 86) The stadium provided 20,000 seats and a covered stand for about 1,500 spectators. Thus, Les Corts “dwarfed any other stadium in Catalonia, and compared favorably with other venues in Europe.” (Burns 1999: 86) The club referred to the stadium as “the Cathedral of Football.” (Shobe 2005: 120)

The idea to build a larger stadium for FC Barcelona was partially a result of the constant rivalry with Real Madrid. The capital team has built its stadium in 1947 and with the larger stadium came larger revenues. Barcelona clearly did not want to lag behind.

Another reason for the need of a larger stadium was the arrival of a Hungarian football star - László Kubala. After a long and difficult signing process caused by Kubala’s illegal escape from communist Hungary in 1949, he was finally signed by Barcelona in 1950. He became wildly successful and popular in FC Barcelona and he helped to win five Championships<sup>31</sup> in 1951. Clearly, more victories drew larger audiences and to accommodate the crowds, a newly elected FC Barcelona President, Francisco Miro-Sans, declared in November 1953 a pledge to build a new, larger stadium. (Burns 1999: 41)

The financing plan of Barcelona’s stadium attracted plenty of financial speculations. During the construction, it was discovered that the geological characteristics of the soil are more complicated than expected, so an additional 20 millions of pesetas had to be allocated.

As Ramon Barnils explains in his book on the history of Barcelona, Spanish bank Santander had expressed its interest to participate in the financing of the new stadium. The proposal was indeed quite interesting: “The bank Santander would not give a loan, but would open accounts for all member of the club and split the total cost between them. Barça had

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<sup>31</sup> The League, the Spanish Cup, the Latin Cup, the Copa Eva Duarte, the Copa Martini Rossi.

34.000 members in 1954 and this way Santander would gain 34.000 additional current accounts. Eventually, it could open around twenty more branch offices in one year. In the end, Santander at that time was the bank with least representation in Barcelona and Catalonia.” (Barnils 1999: 155) This way Barcelona FC did not have to rely on governmental support or financing.

In the end, the new *Nou Camp* stadium, with initial capacity for 93,000 spectators, was inaugurated on September 24, 1957, the day of *Merce*, the Saint patron of the city of Barcelona. The inauguration ceremony was attended by regime officials, such as José Solís Ruiz, the secretary general of the Movement. To this day the Nou Camp stadium remains the largest football stadium in Europe. The importance of the stadium to the fans of a football club and the city dwellers is clear, as the attachment for the stadium is tied to the affection for Barcelona and/or the nation/region of Catalonia. (Shobe 2005: 91)

#### **4.2.3. The Team in International Championships**

In the previous chapter on Real Madrid we have touched a bit the international participation of the clubs. However, it is hard to talk about rivalry when Barcelona had not won a single European title during the Francoist times. The fans of Barcelona continue to repeat that with Franco as the head of state, it was impossible for the team to achieve a victory on the international stage.

The first time FC Barcelona participated in the European Cup was 1959/1960 season, when it finished first in the Spanish League in the previous season. In the preliminary round, Barcelona was paired with CDNA Sofia, in the first round against AC Milan and in quarter final against Wolverhampton Wanderers FC. The semifinal, the draw paired Barça against already known to the reader – Real Madrid CF. Madrid beat Barcelona and eventually secured another European Cup final victory.

FC Barcelona won the Spanish League for the second consecutive year in 1959/1960 and was another chance to participate in the European Cup. The team came very close to winning the title during the *franquismo*, was in the 1960/1961 season when it played the final game and was defeated by SL Benfica from Portugal. It is curious that in order to get to that final stage, Barcelona won over its eternal rival, Real Madrid in the first round. The score was 2-2, and then 1-2 for Barcelona.

The last time Barcelona participated in the 1974/1975 European Cup during the Franco rule was after it won the League in the 1973/1974 season. In the international championship Barcelona played all the way until the final game, when in the semifinal it was defeated by Leeds United AFC.

#### **4.2.4. The Significance Behind the Motto: “*Mes que un club*” (“More than a club”).**

##### **Nationalism of Catalonia**

It is hard to deny that the motto “More than a club” that was announced by Barcelona’s president Narcís de Carreras on January 13, 1968 is a simple confirmation of an already well-known Catalanian mantra. However, for someone outside of Spanish football and political spectrum it might seem as an arrogant statement. The following part looks into the meaning of the phrase from a political perspective.

The speech by Carreras stated: “Barcelona is something more than a club of football, it is a spirit that we carry deep inside, and those are the colors that we love more than anything else.” (Relaño 2012: 252) It implies that football was not the only *raison d’être* of Barcelona FC, as it was also a cultural and ethnical symbol for the region. A clear example was provided in a notoriously known homage game to Catalan national choir group in 1925 that led to the closure of the *Nou Camp* stadium for the period of six months.

Under Franco, Catalonians could not openly oppose the official political preferences or regionalist sentiments and thus the home games of Barça provided a much needed escape of frustration with the regime. You could scream everything you wanted against “regime’s club” and not be persecuted by the same regime. The “regime’s club” was chosen to be Real Madrid and represented all the negatives of the centralized Francoist government. It was an extreme demonstration of public protest within authoritative regime that did not accept criticism.

During *franquismo*, the sympathies for the football club were generated as a simple solidarity with the Catalanian people and a reaction to “antibarça actions of the authorities. ... Every day there are more of those who are identified with the club for reasons other than football itself.” (Gómez 2007: 36)

It is understood that the club clearly identified itself with its geographical location – Barcelona and Catalonia more than with the centralized Madrid and Castilian culture. The club found its initial support in the local population that has valued its distinct language and culture. So it is no surprise that “Barça’s identity has been projected not only through its Catalan identity, but also through its identification of itself in opposition to the alternative political programme of a Spain seen as ‘other.’” (Caspistegui, Walton 2001: 27)

Fernández de Córdoba, an actor and a broadcaster, shortly after the end of the Spanish Civil War announced on the National Radio that “El Español<sup>32</sup> and the Barcelona wore a mask that was too little not to guess the real idea behind these clubs. The sport was the mask that covered the political scene. . . Barcelona constantly carried on the role of providing a place for the nationalistic growth, even up to its mail correspondence. It [the club] participated in Catalan political acts with flags of its colors, until its stadium was closed by authorities for treating disrespectfully the glorious national anthem.” (Candau 1996: 67-

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<sup>32</sup> Now regarded as Espanyol, is traditionally a club that sympathizes with Castilian culture and is located about 10 km from FC Barcelona’s stadium.

68) From the National Radio, de Córdoba continues with a subjective comment that Barcelona used its sportsmanship for propaganda of its region.

Nevertheless, as Foer explains, “Franco never faced any serious opposition from the Catalans.” (Foer 2010: 205) The protests were a sure to adopt “a clear political compromise and practiced a passive opposition to the dictatorship.” (Gómez 2007: 59) In the end, the Basques or specifically terrorist organization ETA, caused the biggest blow to the regime in 1974 with the assassination of Carrero Blanco, mostly accepted *de-facto* successor of Franco.

Another significant segment of Barcelona city dwellers, the immigrants benefited from the existence of the club. It helped them to integrate into a new culture that saw both its major symbols and language prohibited by the regime. Following the Civil war, in 1940s there was an influx of about 100,000 migrants and an additional 400,000 in 1950s. (Burns 1999: 40) For immigrants coming to Catalonia from other parts of Spain, mainly the southern part, joining the cheer for the Barcelona team was the faster way to adapt into a complicated society. “If the migrant to Catalonia wants to belong, his best chance is to get behind the symbol of his new home. It gives him something to talk about at work, and becoming a *socio* makes him a little more like the middle-class Catalans who dominate the Nou Camp.” (Kuper 2006: 106)

On January 25, 1975, ten months before Franco’s death, the journal “Fuerza Nueva” (“The New Force”) published a letter by its reader that said the following: “The Barcelona FC carries out more than just the sport function, it is a political mission. These things cannot be said out loud, we are accused of seeing ghosts.” Then the same reader mentions, how country did not notice what has happened in Nou Camp during the festival of folklore, when Catalans had played “Els Segadors”, Catalan anthem and majority of people has stood up as if it was the national anthem. “Football is a enormous political party of 70.000 [or more] members, much more sympathizers, more or less separatists, but always ‘Catalanised’.” (Botines 1975: 75-77) Indeed, Barcelona is an “enormous political party.” Another metaphor used was “the

epic weapon of a country without a state” written by Manuel Vazquez Montalban in his novel about Barca called *Offside*. (Foer 2010: 195)

Over the years Barça became the “disarmed army of Catalonia”, where it attained a strong symbolical image in the perception of all Spaniards and not only the ones living in Catalonia itself. (Ruiz 2010: 172) The team definitely represented and continues to represent Catalonia as the autonomic region of Spain, and the support of strive for independence of Catalonia is just another evidence of football “simply” following the people and the politics.

## 5. EL CLÁSICO

### 5.1. WHAT IS EL CLÁSICO?

The game of *El Clásico*<sup>33</sup> the Classic had become a legend in the history of football worldwide. Even more than hundred years after the first *El Clásico*, the rivalry between FC Barcelona and Real Madrid draws millions of viewers around the world. For example, *El Clásico* game that was neither decisive nor very important in the early stages of the Spanish League in 2012, attracted 400 million of TV spectators around world. (Besa 2012) Anyone who is following football knows about this historical Spanish game.

For various historical and cultural reasons this rivalry goes far beyond just the football game on the field between two teams or twenty two players. As Duncan Shaw puts it in his dissertation: "It [El Clásico] was a fight on three levels: first, it was the battle of sports giants in Spain; second, regional fight between clubs who represents best Castilian Spain and Catalonia; third, a political battle, especially during *franquismo*, between a club that was generally considered a right-wing and *franquista*<sup>34</sup> and another club that was considered liberal and against the regime." (Fernández 2000: 158)

It is clear that oversimplification of this subject is dangerous and might result in losing crucial information for a comprehensive understanding. Moreover, the use of emotions and personal sympathies towards a certain team while writing about such subject is unfortunately common. For these reasons, it is important to refrain from using personal opinions and keep the paper impartial by stating facts and their interpretation in that historical period.

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<sup>33</sup> The translation to English would be "The Classic", however, more appropriate translation would be the "rivalry match."

<sup>34</sup> *Franquista* – in Spanish from the name of the dictator Francisco Franco – a person who is a follower of Franco's regime, either during the regime itself or a believer of a need to reestablish a regime nowadays.

To understand the atmosphere of El Clásico and its underlining specifics, this part of the thesis commences with a short overview of the inception of the rivalry by describing the first game, then highlighting important games and the mutual attitudes. Afterwards, we will look into two of the most well-known and controversial games and events surrounding these two matches – namely the matches of 1943 and 1968. Then, we talk about the controversial transfer of Argentine player Alfredo Di Stefano from Latin America to Spain that even sixty years later continues to be discussed by spectators. Further, *El Clásico* section talks about multiple accusations of referees for their apparent acts of favoring Real Madrid team. These details will present the reader with a deeper understanding of somewhat tangible rivalry that does exist, but is difficult to explain in an academic paper. The last section strives to connect the theoretical part to the football aspect, drawing conclusions and analyzing the situation.

## 5.2. HISTORY OF THE GAMES

The first *El Clásico* took place on May 13, 1902 in Madrid. Carlos Padrós, the founder of Real Madrid, decided organize a football championship to commemorate the birthday of Alfonso XII, the future king of Spain. This championship was named after the ruler of Spain - the King's Cup. The name was different throughout the history of Spain, accommodating to the political situation – during the Republic it was called the President's Cup, while during Francisco Franco's rule it was known as the Generalissimo Cup, only to return to its original name King's Cup with the political transformation the country experienced in the early 1980s.

Nevertheless, the first *El Clásico* was without any controversies and was won by Barcelona 3 to 1. The only thing to highlight would be a sarcastic comment by a 1902 chronic that Barcelona had as many as six foreign players. (Relaño 2012, 24-26) Even back then the irony of Castilians and their pride in all Spanish was evident.



The next game, the second historical *El Clásico*, sprung controversy and can be regarded as the first disagreement between the teams. The match was nevertheless a friendly game disputed in 1906 in Barcelona. It was arranged as a game between Real Madrid and Barcelona, however, there were only four Barcelona players and the rest were from other city teams. It is interesting to mention that Barcelona still regards that game as a FC Barcelona victory, when Real Madrid does not count it into its *El Clásico* list. Moreover, in 1906 Madrid won Spain's national champion and recorded this game as a tricky trap by Barcelona to damage its prestige and pride. (Relaño, 2012, 29-30)

After the Civil War and with the change of the political regime, *El Clásico* continued to symbolically represent a rivalry between Barcelona, team that for many had a Catalanian undertone of its strive for autonomy, and Madrid that was viewed as a Castilian centralistic tool. Especially, the games of Real Madrid in the Generalissimo Cup became of the utmost importance. Most of the final games of this cup took place in Real Madrid's home stadium, regardless whether the team itself was qualified or not. (Relaño 2012:198)

**Table 7. *El Clásico* games played during the Franco rule in the Generalissimo Cup in its final stages**

Year of the Cup	Stage of the Competition	Date of the game	Teams (first team is the location of the game)	Score
1942/1943	Semifinal	06-06	Barça-RM	3:1
		13-06	<b>RM</b> - Barça	11:1
1953/1954	Semifinal	06-06	RM- Barça	1:0
		13-06	<b>Barça</b> -RM	3:1
1956/1957	Quarterfinal	12-05	RM- Barça	2:2
		19-05	<b>Barça</b> -RM	6:1
1958/1959	Semifinal	7-06	RM- <b>Barça</b>	2:4
		14-06	Barça-RM	3:1
1961/1962	Quarterfinal	15-04	RM- Barça	0:1
		22-04	Barça- <b>RM</b>	1:3
1967/1968	Final	11-07	<b>Barça</b> -RM	1:0
1969/1970	Quarterfinal	30-05	<b>RM</b> -Barça	2:0
		06-06	Barça-RM	1:1
1973/1974	Final	29-06	<b>RM</b> - Barça	4:0

Source: LinguaSport

### 5.3. CONTROVERSIES

#### 5.3.1. Game of 1943

The game of 1943, the semifinal of the Generalissimo Cup was an important match for both teams. FC Barcelona was looking forward to confirm its 1942 year title of the same cup, and Real Madrid was desperately in need of a victory, because its last cup victory was before the Civil War, in 1936. Moreover, both teams were not contenders for the League title, as Barcelona finished it ninth and Real Madrid eleventh. (Relaño 2012: 76)

The 1943 semifinal of the Cup is often used as an example of a “political repression” of Real Madrid over Barcelona, or at least an acknowledgment of an existence of certain “friends in higher” places that assisted Real Madrid in fixing results of the matches in favor of the capital’s team. The score of this July 1943 game<sup>35</sup> and the events during the half time break would make anyone suspicious of the environment that the official government produced.

The first *El Clásico* game of the Cup of Generalissimo in the 1942/1943 season was played in *Nou Camp* and Barcelona won 3-0 over Real Madrid. As Burns writes, Real Madrid team played quite an aggressive game, which included a violent kick at the stomach of the Barça star at the time. However, the referee awarded just a free kick in Barcelona’s favor. Spectators at the *Nou Camp* whistled and booed at the Madrid players and the referee during most part of the match. (Burns 1999: 144) Later the Catalan team was fined for 2.500 pesetas. In order to proceed further in the Championship Real Madrid had to score at least 3 goals at its next home game against Barcelona.<sup>36</sup> The next game was scheduled a week later, on June 13, 1943.

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<sup>35</sup> Real won 11 to 1 against Barcelona.

<sup>36</sup> During the quarterfinal and semifinal games, the scores were aggregated and the winner was who had scored more goals.

To lift the spirit of Real Madrid team, supporters organized a massive provocation; whistles were given out with every ticket bought to the final match in Chamartín<sup>37</sup>. (Burns 1999: 145) As a result, upon entering the camp, Barça team was greeted with deafening loud whistle and booing by Real Madrid. The whistling, booing and screams of offences were extreme. Burns mentions a man dressed in a military uniform, who was screaming throughout the game, “Kill these red Catalans, kills these Catalan dogs.” (Burns 1999: 146) The atmosphere was more than unfriendly towards Barcelona. “It was a patriotic obligation to insult players of Barcelona on their away games”, and, moreover, the match was played in the national – Spanish capital, the insults grew to an unimaginable level. (Gómez 2007: 47) The official newspaper of the francoist regime, *Arriba*, described the atmosphere as “extraordinary nervous.” (Arriba, June 13, 1943)

Some reports by Candau in his book *Madrid-Barça. Historia de un desamor*, and Burns in *Barça. People's passion*, mention an important visit to the changing room of the FC Barcelona that took place before the game. The identity of the visitor to this day is a speculation; however, more sources mention that it was the general director of security giving “instructions on the behavior during the game.” (Candau 1996: 97) Moreover, the referee of the game entered the changing room of Barça as well, and “threatened to judge the game with hard hand.” (Candau 1996: 97)

Real Madrid in the first half scored eight goals. Only in sixteen minutes of this first half Madrid scored seven goals, which means that there was approximately one goal every two and a half minutes! In the second half, despite and spite of expulsion of its player, Barça scored its “goal of honor.” Nevertheless, Madrid managed to score three more. The final result is written in history: 11:1.

Various accounts of that game say that “Barça simply ended up not playing at all. Individual players were fearful of making even the most innocent of tackles because the

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<sup>37</sup> The same stadium was later renamed after Santiago Bernabéu – the name that it holds to this day.

crowd reaction and therefore hardly touched their opponents.” (Burns 1999: 148) The government’s newspaper *Arriba* has written in the aftermaths of the game, that it was “logically, it is impossible [to have] such a wonderful game.” (Arriba 1943) It is a historically the largest victory in *El Clásico* to this day.

The Spanish Committee of Competition fined the Real Madrid club with minimum penalty of \$2.500 pesetas for the behavior of its spectators, and additionally fined both clubs for \$25.000 pesetas to discourage them from repeating such accident in future. (Fernández 1990: 82-83; Relaño 2012:97-98) As a protest of a double fine<sup>38</sup> Barcelona’s president, Enrique Piñeyro, resigned from his post.

After this tense match, the relationship between the clubs was at its worse point in history. Both teams considered the behavior of the other as more outrageous and clearly, Barcelona team and fans were extremely humiliated. To improve the situation, Santiago Bernabéu, the newly elected Real Madrid’s President, had a plan to reverse the tense atmosphere. His idea was simple: to arrange two friendly matches, one in Madrid and the one other in Barcelona. The trip of Barça to the capital of Spain was used for “patriotic excursion: when players were taken to Toledo and for an audience to the mayor of Madrid. (Fernández 1990: 87) The games were success and the relationship improved, for some time.

### 5.3.2. “*Partido de las botellas*” (“The match of the bottles”)

Another match between Real Madrid and Barcelona that deserves our attention is the “The match of the bottles” or “*Partido de las botellas*”, how it is called in Spain. The match took place on July 11, 1968 in the Santiago Bernabéu Stadium. As it was previously mentioned, the Generalissimo Cup was very important in the football community of Spain, as it was named after its leader and due to its calendar was a more intense championship. So

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<sup>38</sup> Barcelona has already paid its fine for the behavior of its spectators during the previous match of the semifinal of the Cup and considered a new fine as a double one and not fare to the club.

when Barcelona and Real Madrid met for the first time in the Cup's final game in July 1968, the excitement and expectations were at the highest on the both sides.

During that game, which took place at "home" in Bernabéu stadium, the majority of spectators were fans of Real Madrid club and it was not common then, as it is now, to travel large distance to watch your team in away games. The fans of Real Madrid were disappointed already in the beginning – in the sixth minute of the match, Barcelona scored. During the later part of the game, Real Madrid's spectators began chanting and demanding a penalty in the Barça area, disregarding the rules of the game. Nevertheless, after few faults against Real Madrid players, the referee's reaction did not satisfy fans of the losing team, moreover spectators started throwing glass bottles at the field. As Relaño confirms, it was an unknown and maximum expression of irritation at that period. (Relaño 2012:199) Eventually the game was paused, the bottles were taken off the field and the game resumed. However, it did not take long before a next attack by Barcelona players caused another shower of bottles. Majority of those glass bottles were empty, however, when they still presented danger when thrown from the height of the stadium. Fortunately, soon the game came to an end, but the bottles continued to fall even when the captain of Barcelona, Jose Antonio Zaldúa went to collect the Cup from Franco's hands. The team decided not to do the traditional victory lap around the field, as the bottles continued to fall. This accident resulted in prohibition of sale of drinks in glass bottles in all Spanish stadia.

It was the first time Barcelona won the Generalissimo Cup title against Real Madrid, and that the Catalan team won it at home added to the humiliation of the capital's club. Moreover, Real Madrid won its last Generalissimo Cup in 1962 and before that all the way back in 1947. Nevertheless, the capital team would have the chance for a revenge match in the 1974 Generalissimo Cup final game that it won against Barcelona.

Another curious situation took place after the match that perfectly describes the emotions and the relationship between Real Madrid's and Barcelona's place in society, which

goes beyond the football. It is said that the spouse of General Vega, who was sitting next to Franco, turned around and told the president of Barcelona, Narcís de Carreras, that she was not upset that his team won, “since Barcelona too was ‘Spanish’.” (Ball 2011: 108-109)

### 5.3.3. Referees

It is known to every football fan that a “friendly” referee can save a match for one team and an “enemy” referee can make your 90-minutes match a hell. There are plenty of strategies to change the momentum of a game: a second yellow or even a direct red card awarded in an undeserved case, a misjudged penalty or an overlooked offside are just few of them. It will be big overstatement to imply that all referees are bribed to change the course of the game; nevertheless everybody at some point is prone to make mistakes. However, the difference exists when a referee makes a mistake due to lack of his/her experience or nervousness during a crucial match, or when one gets bribed to rule in favor of a specific team. Most importantly, in football the decision by a referee can hardly be overruled during the game itself and all the parties: the players of the two teams, coaches and the public have to “swallow” the anger and disagreement and continue playing for the rest of the match.

Some historians, football journalists and commentators often repeat that during the Francoist rule referees were more favorable towards Real Madrid team. For example, in his book on Spanish football Phil Ball concludes that until 1975 there was an “implication that if the referees had not been bought they still feared the consequences of not awarding favors to Franco’s favorite team.” (Ball 2011: 121) In the 1960s opponents of Real Madrid even invented a chant that is used to this day: *Así, así, así gana el Madrid* (That is, that is, that is how Madrid wins). As Ball continues, the chant refers to the rising tendency of referees to judge penalties in favor of Real, especially when playing at their home field – stadium Bernabéu. (Ball 2011: 120)

An evidence of a certain “softness” of the referees towards Real Madrid tactics on the field could be used an example of a game in the League. It was the second encounter between

two eternal rivalries in the season. The game was played in *Les Corts*, FC Barcelona's home stadium, so it goes without saying that the great support expressed by the people for the Catalan team, which was winning five to one. However, a conflict took place during the last minutes of the game, between Kubala, Barcelona's star player and few Real Madrid players. It resulted in an assault by Madrid players on the referee. All players continued to play the match. Later on, however, "the authorities fined Barça for 10.000 pesetas, moreover, one Barça player was suspended for four games; and another five of his colleagues received further individual fines. Real Madrid . . . was left untouched." (Ball 2011:167)

One of the most curious cases of refereeing was the match that the young Basque Emilio Guruceta oversaw. He was chosen to referee the quarterfinal of the 1970 Cup between Barcelona and Real Madrid. The game was extremely important to both teams, considering that at that moment they both were already mathematically not able to win the Spanish League, so eventually the Cup of Generalissimo was their last chance to achieve football glory in 1969/1970 season. Real Madrid won the first game by 2-0 at home game in Bernabéu stadium, but the second one game was more complicated with Barcelona leading 1-0.

At the end of the first half Barcelona scored its first goal, but then in the beginning of the second half Guruceta awarded Real Madrid "more than dubious penalty." (Ball 2011: 138) The referee at the moment of a possible fault by Barcelona's Rife against Real's Velazquez was about thirty-five meters behind the players, so the stadium and Barcelona's team erupts in protests.<sup>39</sup> (Birns 1999: 168) The penalty against the Catalonian team was scored and now Real Madrid was leading, in the number of total goal scored.

The decisiveness of the game and the last minutes suspicious penalty added to the conspiracy theories. Was Guruceta paid by Real or was he not? It sure helped the Madrid

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<sup>39</sup> Moreover, it can be seen from a video of that game that Velazquez was able to move himself into the penalty box by jumping towards it.

team – later on they went on to win over Valencia in the final and secured themselves the trophy of the Cup of Generalissimo. The fact that Guruceta was Basque is curious, as his region is as nationalistic as Catalonia itself, moreover with the existence of a notorious Basque terrorist group ETA. Alternatively, the decision that Guruceta would be the referee of this important match could have been part of the grand plan, as someone from a Franco-friendly part of Spain would be more likely to judge in favor of Real Madrid. This way, a Basque origin makes in unlikely, at least for some, the possibility of a bribed referee.

Emilio Guruceta went on to buy an expensive BMW car two months after the game. For most people, it was another evidence of a bribe given to him for a “more fit” result. (Ball 2011: 139) The truth is buried with Emilio, as he died in an unfortunate car crash in 1987. Adding more suspicion to the story, seven years after that accident, a “Belgian intermediary admitted that the Anderlecht<sup>40</sup> president had bribed a referee for the Cup’s semifinal game in 1984.” (Ball 2011: 140) It is curious to note that Emilio Guruceta was the referee at that match. It is “once a cheat, always a cheat?”

The term “political refereeing” that was used by Cruyff or Núñez, former President of Barça, to describe the idea that refereeing against FC Barcelona was used to secure victories for Real Madrid and was orchestrated from the government. (Kuper 2006: 104) Today it is hard to certainly tell whether the referees were partial towards a certain Spanish team, because then the recording of sport events was at its beginnings<sup>41</sup>. Moreover, the quality was worse than today’s recordings, so even looking at it again it is hard to make a confident judgment.

Nevertheless, FC Barcelona was constantly alert on any less than impartial refereeing by the referees, especially during the games that took place away from their home stadium, *Nou Camp*. The referring and especially “not fair” referring was an important uniting force in

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<sup>40</sup> It is a football team in Belgium.

<sup>41</sup> In 1950s and 1960s, when first matches were being filmed and being transmitted on state television.



the development of FC Barcelona team spirit and the mutual connection within its spectators. Especially, the “Guruceta case”, how the 1970 quarterfinal game is not referred as a decisive turning point in its history, as after the “undeserved” loss Barcelona’s fans openly showed their disagreement and immediately connected Real Madrid’s victory to such will of the authorities. “The corruption and partiality of Spanish referees during the Franco era is one of the many *bête noires* of Barça’s official history.” (Burns 1999: 13)

#### **5.3.4. Transfer of Di Stéfano**

The transfer of Argentinean player Di Stéfano could be called one of the most controversial in the history of football. Both Real Madrid and Barcelona were eager to add this “*La maquina*” (“The machine”), as he was nicknamed for his impressive statistics<sup>42</sup>, to their team. At that moment, FC Barcelona already had a fantastic star player – Kubala, so the thought of uniting Kubala and Di Stéfano on one side opposite Real Madrid was a direct threat to the regime’s club’s image and future.

The complication for their brilliant plan was the fact that Di Stéfano was player of the Argentine team River Plate, however, due to complicated transactions and moves, until the end of 1954 he was under contract to continue playing for the Colombian club Millonarios in Bogotá. (Relaño 2012: 131) The two Spanish teams engaged in negotiations for the same player with different Latin American teams, eventually it resulted in a massive confusion and a bitter confrontation. At the end, Real Madrid had succeeded and Di Stéfano went on to become the greatest player of all times scoring for the Madrid team. Nevertheless, Barça’s supporters still consider the Di Stéfano’s transfer a greatest steal from Barcelona and a clear evidence of the positive interference of the authorities on behalf of Madrid team. The controversy surrounding the transfer deserves a book on its own. Here are presented general and most important points.

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<sup>42</sup> Only while playing in Colombia, Di Stéfano has scored more than 200 goals. (Ball 2011: 131)

The event that has triggered the interest in transferring Argentine Di Stéfano was on the tour of Millonarios, Di Stéfano's club at that time, to Madrid in March 1952 to commemorate the 50th anniversary of Real Madrid. During the first match of the Millonarios, Santiago Bernabéu was immediately impressed with the skills of Di Stéfano, as "he was clearly several notches above anything [he] had previously seen." (Ball 2011:131) Unfortunately for Madrid, Barcelona's 'chief scout', Samitier, was there too.

The first step in the transfer process was made by Barça. Its leaders entrusted with negotiations with Latin American side to a Catalan nationalistic lawyer Ramón Trías Fargas. The strategy was to directly contact River Plate in Argentina, which was still an official employer of Di Stéfano. Ramón Trías Fargas had in fact managed to sign "memorandum of understanding" with River Plate, beating Real Madrid.

The whole matter well enough surpassed the scale of a simple football transfer. As the following quote shows, there were many things at stake with this transfer and Madrid did not want to lose its chance to dramatically improve its game. As Catalan lawyer wrote to his father in a telegram:

*"Football in our country has become a very important issue, as it is the only way we can collectively convey our regional problem. Therefore the Di Stéfano question is a national problem. That is why my telegrams are being sent in code form. We know for a fact that our telephones are being bugged by the government of Madrid. . ." (Burns 1998: 157)*

When Samitier was appointed to aid Trías Fargas in the negotiation process, it resulted in more complications for Barça. Unfortunately, Samitier had brought in Joan Busquets, a Catalan-Colombian and the director of FC Santa Fe – the rival of Millonarios – to the negotiation process. Following this new addition, it looked as if Busquets and Samitier were there to sabotage the transfer than assist Trías Fargas. (Ball 2011: 134; Burns 1998: 157) Nonetheless, Di Stéfano left Bogotá without a signed agreement with the Latin American club, and arrived directly to Barcelona on May 17, 1953. (Burns 1998: 157) Trías Fargas

continued to negotiate with the Colombian team, as River Plate had conditioned the transfer of Di Stéfano to an agreement with Millonarios. However, as soon as the Catalan lawyer had finally secured a favorable deal, the Barça president, Marti Carretó, appointed by Franco, had intervened and refused to pay a lowered sum for the transfer, which was as close as never before.

At this moment Real Madrid has finally started its negotiation process with Millonarios. Around that time, the Spanish Football Federation issued a new law banning the acquisition of foreign players. (Burns 1998: 158-159) Though, Di Stéfano was to be excluded from this ban, the Federation had flexed its power and proposed a Solomonian solution to the problem: for the next four seasons Di Stéfano would be a rotating player, playing a year in each team, starting of course with Real Madrid. This deal was signed on September 15, 1953. Not long afterwards, following a volcano of criticism from Catalan media, Carretó resigned Barça's presidency. The interim board of directors decided to start anew and decided to "tear apart the agreement and handed Di Stéfano over to Madrid." (Ball 2011: 134)

#### **5.4. THE ROLE IN THE SOCIETY**

At this point of the thesis, it must be clear that football matches between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona were not simple sport games during the Francoist rule. They brought many sentiments and emotions that culminated in an extraordinary rivalry. The bond that was formed between politics and football is apparent. The teams represented a "political affiliation", matches were used as "political protest", the club's management was "politicians" and the fans of the clubs were faithful "party members."

It is mentioned by some football and political commentators that the rivalry of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona commenced long before Franco's victory in the Civil War. However,

particularly during his rule all those sentiments and symbols intertwined to serve political purposes of the Francoist regime.

In this last part of the thesis the goal is to analyze the symbolism the regime put into the football and specifically the football teams of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona. First, we will analyze the importance of the European Cup that Real Madrid won six times during *franquismo* and FC Barcelona won none. The crucial end of international political isolation and new positive image of Spain are developed in this section as well. Then, the interstate developments are analyzed: the advantages and plans of the regime for the football in the authoritarian society. Later, the part of the influence of media logically follows, describing better the “state machine” that was to direct the society into following sport rather than politics. The last part is dedicated to not as tangible factors as symbolism and emotions towards the teams of Real Madrid and FC Barcelona.

#### **5.4.1. The Usage of Football, Particularly of CF Real Madrid team, by the Francoist Politics on the International Level**

The importance of the participation of Real Madrid in international football competitions, especially the European Cup, can be viewed in a close relation to the international politics and the perception of the Francoist regime in the world, Europe in particular.

First, the whole European Championship was partially organized by Santiago Bernabéu, the long term Real Madrid’s President. Real Madrid won the first five Championships and to this day is the most successful European club. Nevertheless, the Francoist government more importantly saw an opportunity to promote its regime to the outside of Spain through the success of its football team. It is apparent that the lack of victories of FC Barcelona in the European Cup is in accordance with the Francoist mentality –

there could be only one representative of “united Spain” and it must come from the heart of its Castilian culture – Madrid.

It goes without saying that Real Madrid secured its victories mainly because of its excellent football team, composed as we could see from the Di Stéfano case thanks to the help from the regime. Nevertheless, the important are the political consequences and the way the official regime made sure that the international popularity and the stardom of Real Madrid were to leave a positive effect of the overall image of the post-war Spain.

The goal of mixing football and politics was made in order to make the international projection of Spain happen through football, as a way to escape the isolation of the regime on the world stage. Real Madrid was to build diplomatic bridges for the government. On multiple occasions Santiago Bernabéu himself pointed out the service Real Madrid is doing to the nation. Thus, the football club perfectly understood the task that it had within the country on the world.

An all clarifying quote was made by Franco’s Foreign Minister, Fernando Mara de Castiella pronounced, who argued that “Real Madrid is a style of sportsmanship. It is the best embassy we have ever had.” (Burns 1999: 164) Franco had chosen Real Madrid as symbol of Spain in the European football at took it to the continent to represent the country, “fighting” the rest of the teams and even managing playing against its eternal rival – FC Barcelona – on the European stage.

CF Real Madrid and FC Barcelona met only four times in the history of the European Cup. They met twice during the Francoist years and twice already in the twenty-first century. First time it was in the 1959/1960 season, during their semifinal game that Real Madrid won 3 to 1 both times. The second encounter was less successful for the capital team, as in the first leg FC Barcelona managed to knock Real Madrid out with a draw in the first game and 2 to 1 in the second. That year Barcelona went all the way to the final game against Portuguese team SL Benfica, but lost 3 to 2. It was the closest the Catalan team came to winning the

European Championship, until it finally won it for the first time in the 1991/1992 season, long after the *Caudillo* died.

**Table 8. Comparison FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid European Cup victories during the Franco rule**

<u>Barcelona</u>	<u>Real Madrid</u>
	1955/1956
	1956/1957
	1957/1958
	1958/1959
	1959/1960
	1965/1966

Source: LinguaSport

Table 8 makes an interesting and impactful evidence as it more easily portrays how Barcelona did not win a single European Cup Championship during the Francoist rule.

Francisco Franco was sure to thank his team for their effort and hard work. However, even before Real Madrid won the inaugural year of the European Cup, Franco decorated the whole team with the Imperial Order of the Yoke and Arrows, which was the symbol of the official movement of the Francoist government. (Ball 2011: 126) Interestingly, the event occurred in 1955, even before the team had won its first Cup. Nevertheless, after the victory club was awarded again, this time with the Gold Medal of the City to the club overall and the Grand Cross of Civil Merit to Santiago Bernabéu himself. (Burns 1999: 164)

It only leaves us to conclude that Franco completely understood the power of football. He took advantage of football victories of Real Madrid and from that he made political dividends on the world stage. Francisco Franco should not only be known for his hard and cruel practices during the Civil War and in its aftermath, but also for his “soft politicking” or usage of the possibilities offered by Real Madrid. On the other hand, the regime could not have allowed a Catalan team that was viewed as a direct opposition to the official regime to win a European Cup. It is clear that during *franquismo* football seized to be only football and

acquired an international dimension. In the next section we will discuss the inter-political dimension: the usage of football by the authorities to influence the society.

#### **5.4.2. The Role of Football in the Authoritarian Regime**

Franco believed in shifting the focus of the attention of the citizens from politics, social issues and regionalism to other topics, such as the search of the common enemy, eradication of leftist thought and football. His thesis was that “people would be less likely to revolt if they were encouraged to focus their energies on football instead of politics.” (Shobe 1997: 7) Media and especially television played an invaluable role in this process.

It is worth to draw parallels with the phrase that came from the Roman Empire, when the rulers gave “Bread and Circus” to the society with the goal to distract them from poor public policies and governmental rulings. Spaniards translated the expression into local language: “*Pan y toros*” or “Bread and bullfights” and was used in the 19th and 20th century. During the Francoist rule we could change that to the “Bread and Football,” as football was used as a destruction and manipulative political tool.

To understand the factors that lead to a deep symbolism within the perception of Real Madrid and Barcelona teams, we would have to mention three underlining reasons or factors that influence the society towards it. One is being the past, more specifically the Civil War and the political left-right division of Spain. And the second is the general opposition to the Francoist regime in the country. The third is the regionalism and autonomy struggle of Catalonia. Let us now elaborate more on each of those determining factors.

It is no secret that majority of social tensions in Spain to this day have their roots in the Civil War and even in the era before it. There is a group of leftist and republican people, as well as another part that is more conservative and monarchist. Generally not all of the right is fan of Francisco Franco; however, there are some interesting examples.

As *Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas* or the Center for Investigate Sociology in Spain had reported, the political divide continues within the football team preferences to this day. The report says that between the sympathizers of political left there is 41 percent of FC Barcelona fans, when for Madrid that number is only 20 percent. (Castro 2009) When looking at specific, modern-day political parties, only 13,7 percent of FC Barcelona fans support the center-right political party *Partido Popular*, while that number is close to 50 percent for Real Madrid fans. The question of political preferences is even more polarized when we take a look at the regional politics in Catalonia. *Convergència i Unió* or Convergence and Union, the moderate right Catalan nationalistic party, has a base of electorate of which 85 percent are fans of FC Barcelona. That number is even higher – 93 percent, for *Esquerra Republicana* or the Party of Republican Left, the party of Josep Suñol, the Barça's president that was killed by Franco's troops in 1939. (Castro 2009)

The reader should keep in mind that those numbers are coming from modern day Spain, as during Franco times the people did not have a choice or “political preferences” as it is understood today. All the “political preferences” had to be voiced somewhere else, and the stadium provided that possibility.

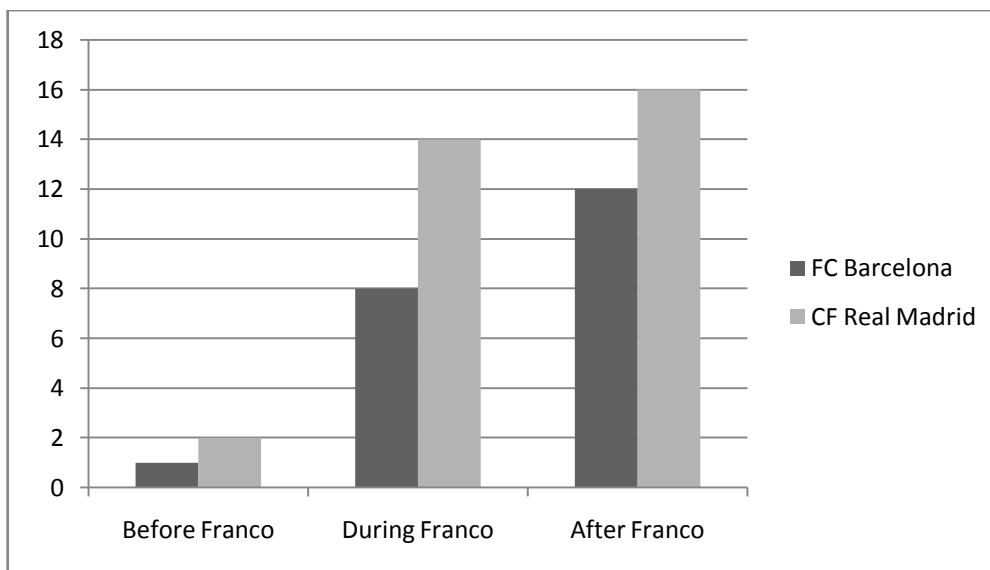
That directs us to the second point, that football as a general way to “let out” the political disagreements and different views from the official government. It is logical that citizens had taken it to stadia to manifest their disagreement with the regime's politics. They could not win over the regime, but they could win over Real Madrid, the regime's team. “To stand on the terraces and whistle and jeer at ‘Franco's team’ was probably the most popular form of political protest against the dictatorship.” (Shaw 1995: 2)

Surprisingly or not, the Francoist regime played its part in this “political football game.” It allowed the citizens to express their disrespect and all the negative feelings they had towards Real Madrid team, in hope that it would keep protesters away from the city's streets, where they are harder to control and predict. It was a way to “depoliticize” the



society and “politicize” the football. A brilliant idea coming from “state machinery” of Franco! He was able to transform a political battle into a football battle, supporting at times Real Madrid, however, not pressing FC Barcelona too hard to ruin the rivalry. It is another characteristic element of an authoritarian regime versus a totalitarian. Hitler had no trouble sending whole team of former professional football players of Kyiv teams to concentration camps, when they refused to lose against German soldiers in a notorious 1942 “death match” in the Ukrainian capital. Franco, being an authoritarian leader, did not have to resolve to such drastic measures. He kept FC Barcelona afloat, controlling the club from above in the first fifteen years after the Civil War. Later, he did assist Real Madrid, but that assistance was not systematic and in no way could be generalized. The following tables show the statistics of all *El Clásico* games played before, during and after Franco.

**Table 9. Comparison of victories of FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid in the Spanish League, before, during and after Franco<sup>43</sup>.**



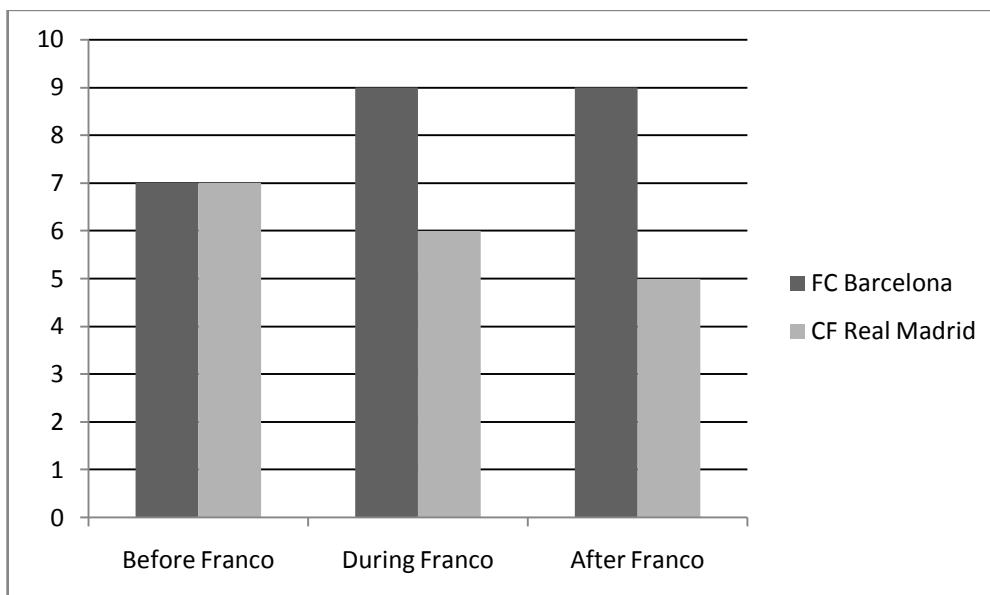
Source: LinguaSport and author’s calculations

In the above table it is evident that Real Madrid has enjoyed a stable regularity of higher number of victories in the Spanish League than FC Barcelona team. The apparent fact

<sup>43</sup> Before Franco – from 1902 to 1939, during Franco is from 1939 to 1975, after Franco is from 1975 to 2012.

is that the superiority of Real Madrid, in number of the League titles, has been higher throughout both non-democratic and democratic periods.

**Table 10. Comparison of victories of FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid in the Spanish Cup, before, during and after Franco**



Source: LinguaSport and author's calculations

The above graph, nevertheless, describes a complete opposite situation from the Spanish League championship. Here victories of FC Barcelona are prevalent throughout two periods – both non-democratic and democratic, and the first period both teams have managed to secure seven victories each. It is difficult to find a clear correlation simply looking at number of victories of Spanish League and Spanish Cup titles. and FC Barcelona, will be taken in the capitol concentrated specifically on their rivalry – *El Clásico*.

The following graphs show that it is impossible to find a systematic victory pattern in Real Madrid's history when comparing those periods of Spanish history.

The last underlying factor is the regionalism of Catalonia. This aspect was largely covered during previous sections, both the theoretical and specifically with regards to Barça. The Francoist policy towards possible regionalization was characterized by a strong centralization of power in the capital – Madrid, as Franco denied any regional autonomy to

other regions<sup>44</sup>. Regions did not even have a chance to show their disagreement, as the regime was fast to crush any opposition.

However, when talking about the FC Barcelona team, it is always important to mention its stadium, *Nou Camp*, which had proved to be extremely helpful in safeguarding and promoting Catalan culture. During *franquismo*, due to the massive size of the stadium, it was the only place where one could freely speak Catalan. Catalan nationalist indeed united themselves against Franco regime, not on a street during a political protest, but in a stadium during a football match.

#### **5.4.3. El Clásico and football in state controlled media**

Television and other media outlets played an important role in the promotion of the central governmental control. The goal was to destruct the society from political problems and focus them rather on the football issues.

Since its experimental broadcasting began in 1953, Televisión Española (TVE) had the monopoly over television broadcasting in Spain, corresponding to the first period of significant economic growth in the country since the end of the Civil War in 1939. The regular broadcasting began in October 1956 only in the capital, Madrid. (Palacio 2005: 601) Further development of the television was not encouraged by Franco, as it is widely thought that the dictator, first of all, considered it as a threat to isolationism of Spain. However, in 1957 Vatican issued the Encyclical Letter where it expressed support for the development of television. (Palacio 2005: 601)

As a result, the *Caudillo* was not willing to be left out of the wave of the expansion of television and allowed further spreading of television in Spain. The first milestone was the arrival of television broadcasting to Barcelona in April of 1959. (Palacio 2005: 603) The level of Franco's personal control over the television can be only speculated. However, considering

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<sup>44</sup> Especially the Basque country and Catalonia that use their own language, *euskera* and *català*, accordingly.

the type of the regime and taking into the account the large influence of television on Spanish population, the presence of Franco during media decisions could be expected to have been profound. The regime understood the importance of the censorship of the new media and in 1951 established a new ministry: the Ministry of Information and Tourism (MIT). It almost goes without saying that the minister of the MIT presided the governing board of the TVE. (Dobek-Ostrowska 2010: 106)

As a confirmation of the importance of television for the regime, Grugel and Rees in their book on Franco's Spain mention that "control of television, which was a state monopoly financed by advertising, was the most important outlet" of the regime. (Grugel, Rees 1997: 151)

The first live football match enjoyed by the Spanish population, interestingly, was an *El Clásico* match in February 1959. (Burns 1998: 150) As Burns points out, there is information that prior to the event it was impossible to buy a TV set.

With the economic growth of late 1950's and with consequent spread of television within the Spanish households, the culture of television in Spain became inseparable from the culture of football. The two structures were interconnected. As Duncan Shaw explains in his article in the *History Today*, football was to become a game of a mass spectator, a sport that fostered a 'culture of evasion'<sup>45</sup>. At the same level, football with the help of mass media has helped Franco regime to achieve such social phenomena as social apathy and passive acceptance, which were crucial for a dictatorship.

In his book, Burns cites a point of view of Barça player, Charly Rexach, who says that because Real Madrid had such a prominent position, almost monopoly for the broadcasting time on the state television, it became the "default" team to support. The choice was between

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<sup>45</sup> The term „culture of evasion” was used by Raymond Carr in his book *Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy*, where he explains it as „an escape from immediate reality.” (Carr 1981: 118)

the city's team, and if there was none, the choice was made for Real Madrid, simply because "Real Madrid was promoted as Spain's club." (Ball 1998: 165)

For all the circumstances mentioned above, television, through the second half of Franco's regime, was developing into an important propaganda tool in the Spanish society. As it will be discussed in upcoming chapters, football went hand-in-hand with the influence of television.

#### **5.4.4. The Roles that were set for CF Real Madrid and FC Barcelona**

This part is more of a larger conclusion; it underlines all the important fact that had been mentioned throughout the thesis.

To put the complicated mass of information into some kind of frame it is useful to refer to the three underlining characteristics mentioned in the 5.4.2. section of this paper. To remind the reader, those were: political division of the country, opposition to the Francoist regime and the regionalism. Each team presented a different pole in those three elements, and this part of the thesis will place the teams in their respective sides as well as labeling symbolic message each team carried.

As it was mentioned before, the FC Barcelona represents a more left political spectrum of the Spanish society, that was true during the Francoist times and stays in the present. With the leftist ideology come the republican feelings and the apathy or negative viewing of the Spanish monarchy. Real Madrid is all the opposite. During the Francoist times it was allowed to keep in its emblem a crown and kept its name like it is now – "Real" or the "Royal". The Real Madrid fans tend to be more conservative politically, and some even look upon the Francoist times as better times for Spain.

The second point is simple. The FC Barcelona resisted all what came with the Francoist regime, as it was viewed as a great oppressor to the cultural development of Catalan society. For Catalonians football and cheering for their team in the *Nou Camp* stadium

was the only legal way to express their sentiments of deep disagreement with the Francoist government. FC Barcelona was the ultimate symbol of the opposition to the regime. Real Madrid fans were the winners of the Civil War and enjoyed great preference by the regime, so there was no need on their part to protest against *franquismo*. This was Real Madrid was made a symbol of support of the political regime and preference of *franquismo* over any other political and cultural structure.

The last point is highly connected to the previous two. *El Clásico* represented the rivalry of two teams from two major Spanish cities. Real Madrid, partly due to its centralist location was a perfect symbol for the nationalistic and centralist Francoist regime. FC Barcelona, located in the capital of Catalonia was logically another perfect symbol for Spanish regions that wanted greater autonomy from the central government. The historical roots of the club, the symbolism in its colors and emblems to this day hold a key to the understanding the Catalan culture.

## 6. OVERALL CONCLUSIONS

There are numerous interesting aspects to consider while describing the Francoist regime; hence, football is a non-traditional way to approach the subject. The fact is that within Spanish borders, open political opposition to the central government was extremely limited, close to non-existent, and logically led to the symbolical people's opposition through football. To demonstrate their disagreement, fans in their stadium cheered for their favorite local team and against Real Madrid or the "Regime Team" on every possible occasion. Through this symbolic rebellion people were able to demonstrate their resistance to the official government. In this line, FC Barcelona presented the regional land of Catalonia, part of Spain that to this day struggles for larger autonomy and national identification against centralistic efforts of Madrid.

Opposite to FC Barcelona is Real Madrid, a team that was supported by the Francoist regime in order to embody a symbolic victorious club that presented a renewed Spain. So it does not come as surprise that Real Madrid team had the most glorious years and won the most important victories during the Franco rule.

Nevertheless, a more determining aspect in the rivalry between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona is the exemplarity of the usage of football in order to maintain political stability within Spanish society. It is an evidence of an approach of an authoritarian regime toward a "problematic group" in the country. In contrast to the totalitarian regime tactics, authoritarian regime of Franco did not dissolve FC Barcelona club or imprisoned its players (at least in the later stage of the regime), but allowed this rivalry to exist, in order to let the political disagreements erupt in the stadium and not on the street in an open protest.

Another important task set for Real Madrid was a positive representation of Spain to the outside world, specifically Europe and the United States, on the level of international club championships. As the Spain was *de facto* ally of the Axis during the World War II, immediately after the war it was punished with international political isolation, and positive

presentation of Spain through football helped improve its image on the world stage and later on aided to end faster the isolation.

The tensions within the society would have had existed in the country as the Civil War opened many wounds that could be violently demonstrated and cause numerous clashes. For this reason, football provided an environment where one could express their disagreements through support of a specific team, and not be punished due to the size of the stadium. The rivalry between Real Madrid and FC Barcelona was an example of a political rivalry through non-traditional means.

## **7. SUMMARY**

This Master's thesis „Franco years in Spain through El Clásico: FC Barcelona vs. Real Madrid” explores the football rivalry between Real Madrid and Barcelona teams during the *franquismo*. The theme of Real Madrid, understood as a team supported and promoted by the Spanish regime is prevailing throughout the paper. Another part describes deep cultural symbolism of FC Barcelona in Catalanian region. The last part unites those two subjects by explaining how their rivalry or *El Clásico* games, were more than just a match of football. Emotional attachments, political manifestations and historical differences always prevailed throughout their matches.



## 8. LIST OF TABLES AND GRAPHS

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Table 3. The League and the Cup Titles of Real Madrid (1939-1975)

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Table 5. Number of members of FC Barcelona (1908-1939)

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Table 7. *El Clásico* games played during the Franco rule in the Generalissimo Cup in its final stages

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Table 9. Comparison of victories of FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid in the Spanish League, before, during and after Franco

Table 10. Comparison of victories of FC Barcelona and CF Real Madrid in the Spanish Cup, before, during and after Franco

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